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AUGUST 28 / SEPTEMBER 4, 2000 • $3.95

FOUR GORE YEARS?

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Christopher Caldwell
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David Tell

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SPECIAL POLITICAL BOOKS ISSUE

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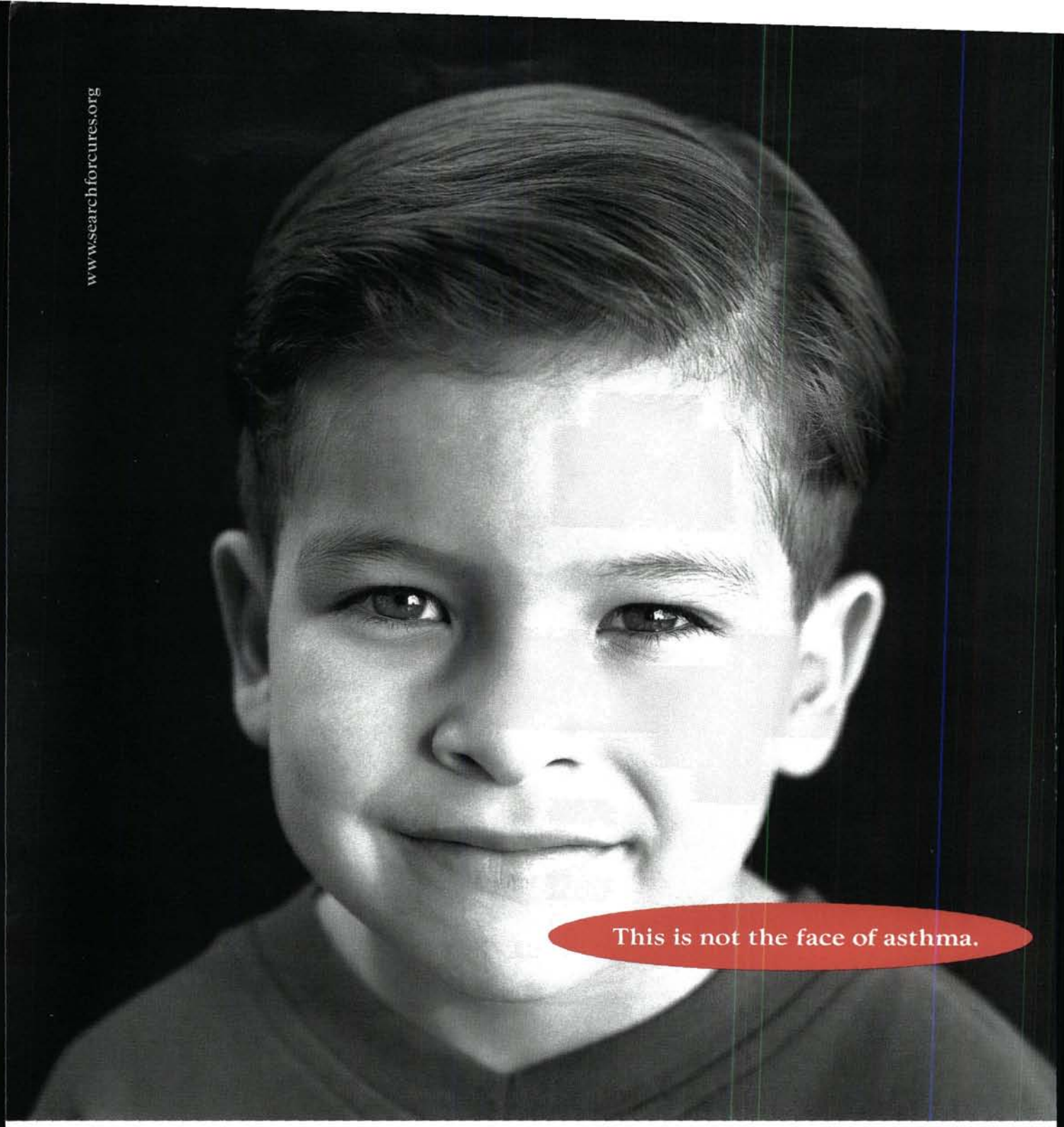

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the weekly Standard

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The *Times* Gets It Right—or Left

Let it never be said that THE SCRAPBOOK is a Negative Nelly, just carp, carp, carp all day long, with scarcely a kind word for anyone. This week we have a kind word for the *New York Times*.

But first, a kind word for THE SCRAPBOOK. Three weeks ago in Philadelphia, we criticized the *Times* for greeting Republican delegates on the opening day of their convention with a front-page story of stunning obviousness. "Poll of Delegates Shows Convention Solidly on Right," said the headline. The *Times* had actually gone to the trouble of commissioning a poll of Republican delegates, only to discover that most of these people who had traveled hundreds and thousands of miles to attend the convention of America's conservative party were . . . it's hard to believe . . . conservative! More conservative than most Americans! The story and its dramatic placement struck us (and not only us) as a sly bit of GOP-bashing—a signal to readers that George W. Bush's vaunted redefining of the Republican party was merely a scam.

We patiently took the trouble of explaining matters to the *Times*: People who go to political conventions are activists, and activists are ideological, so you can bet that people who go to a party's convention will exhibit, in concentrated form, that party's ideology. And we closed—rather cattily, we see now—by saying that we looked forward to reading the *Times*'s story at the Democratic convention, explaining to its readers how all those ultra-liberal delegates were so far to the left of the American mainstream.

Which story, to our delight, appeared on the first day of the convention last week in Los Angeles. "Poll Finds Delegates to the Left of Both Public and Party," read the headline. "The delegates arriving here . . . think of themselves as moderates, but their views on issues . . . are more liberal than those of the public or even Democratic voters generally." Once again, the gist of the story is so . . . so *duh*. But in placement and substance, it is just about a mirror image of the article written for Philadelphia. The larger point of the Republican story—that the delegates are more extreme than the image their nominee is (hypocritically) hoping to cultivate—was missing from last week's story about the Democrats. But that's understandable. For the Democratic nominee himself has yet to decide what image he wants the party to present. Firebreathing Jacobin? Techno-geek New Democrat? When the *Times* figures that one out, it'll have a real story. ♦

Hollow Praise

The day before the convention officially opened, the America Israel Public Affairs Committee and some other Jewish organizations sponsored an event at the Sony Studios lot for Joe Lieberman and Bill and Hillary Clinton. It will not go down as a landmark in the history of political advance work. The reporters and camera crews were penned in a hot, sun-beaten triangle of grass, and then were kept waiting for nearly two hours as the Clintons dilly-dallied at a Barbra Streisand fund-raiser across town.

The podium from which the speakers would speak had been erected in front of an advertisement for Sony's forthcoming movies, as a way for the studio to cadge a little free publicity. But if an enterprising photographer crouched low, he could get a splendid picture of Clinton or Lieberman with the phrase "Hollow Man" looming above his head. These Democratic advance men have got to become more irony-conscious.

At last the guests of honor arrived. Hillary's remarks were an automatic-pilot campaign pitch, and Bill's defense of the recent Camp David talks was strictly *pro forma*. The interesting speeches came from the cabinet secretaries. They went out of their way to lavish praise on their boss, with the kind of competitive suck-upsmanship that second-tier pols specialize in. The chorus of flattery spiraled upward, until it climaxed, if we can use that word in an item about the president, with Dan Glickman, who some people may remember as the secretary of agriculture. (Ag secretaries do not routinely deliver climactic speeches.) Clinton, said Glickman, is "one of the most extraordinary people of all time." Let's see: Moses, St. Augustine, Isaac Newton, Bill Clinton. This must be the Democratic National Convention! ♦

Hef at the Hutch

It was with a grim sense of anthropological duty that THE SCRAPBOOK hied itself over to a party at the Playboy Mansion, held the Saturday night before the convention. The party was tossed for newsfolk—including rough-hewn, shoe-leather types like Bryant Gumbel, who said he knows who will win on *Survivor* but refused to tell us. He was not the only tease in attendance, however. Playboy bunnies, their cottontails aquiver, gladly posed for Polaroids with all comers, many of whom returned for follow-ups three or four times. Plied by mansion staff with

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drinks and beef satays, many of our giddy colleagues went on a voyeuristic safari through Hugh Hefner's infamous Grotto, the legendary love cave where steam rises from the tropically humid pools. (One of the barboys said he'd refuse to swim in there unless the water was first bombed with Clorox bleach.)

Midway through the evening our host emerged from his lair (which was off-limits to journos). We thanked "Hef"—as we have come to think of him—for the spread, told him we'd had one complimentary cocktail too many, and asked him if he would mind putting us up for the night, as we were in no condition to drive. Hef did not look amused. Pushing on, we asked him the question we knew America wanted to ask, and would have asked, if America had been fortified with as much liquid courage as THE SCRAPBOOK: Even though Loretta Sanchez had been forced to cancel her Playboy fund-raiser, would he be willing, if she were willing, to do an, ah, exposé of the congresswoman? Hef pursed his lips, pausing thoughtfully while looking skyward. "I haven't had anything to drink, so I'm not foolish enough to answer that," he said graciously.

Toward the end of the evening, a media rep asked us if we were having a great time. "A *great* time," we said.

"Good," she said. "Enjoy it. You'll never be back." ♦

President Non Grata

There were two presidents in Los Angeles as the convention was getting underway. One, of course, was Bill Clinton. The other was Taiwan's Chen Shui-bian, who, except for a brief wave to well-wishers, stuck to his hotel room Sunday night, trying hard not to be the skunk at Clinton's party.

Even so, Chen's overnight presence—he was just catching some sleep on his way to Central America and Africa—proved to be embarrassing for the White House. Sam Gejdenson, the ranking Democrat on the House International Relations Committee, had invited about a dozen congressmen to meet Taiwan's new president. When Chen ultimately declined the invitation, Gejdenson told the press that the heavy hand of the White House had "pressured [Chen] to refrain from meeting with Congress during his visit."

Chen, who took power earlier this year in the first peaceful and democratic change of governments in China's 5,000-year history, is obviously a major irritant to the thugs in Beijing. You would think he'd be less of an irritant to the world's oldest political party. But no. While the Democrats spent much of the week toasting their commitment to human rights, their party still couldn't find time to warm up to the new democracy in Taiwan. President Chen deserved better. ♦

Polishing Al Gore's Résumé

As everyone knows, Al Gore's advisers are trying desperately to dream up ways to distinguish their man from his boss. One obvious way to do that,

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you might think, is to highlight Al Gore's experience in the real world. Bill Clinton seems to have been born a professional politician. According to reliable biographers, "Good to see you—thanks so much for your support" were the first words young Billy spoke from his highchair. Out of law school he went straight to his first (unsuccessful) run for public office. And once he had settled at the public trough—excuse us, once he had *entered public service*—he never voluntarily left. (The closest thing the president had to a real job was a quick fling as a prof at a state law school.)

By contrast, Al Gore at least tried, however briefly, to live a normal life before taking the plunge. As a soldier, then a newspaper reporter, this year's Democratic nominee had a chance to familiarize himself with the world the rest of us live in. So surely voters will reward him for his real-life experience, right?

Alas, the data are not promising. As a public service of its own, and in its continuing effort to shore up the Gore campaign, THE SCRAPBOOK leafed through the annual Gallup Poll that rates the public's esteem for various professions—you know, the one that always shows car dealers finishing last. Of the 45 professions rated, newspaper reporters ranked at number 28. This may be surprisingly good for newspaper reporters (it puts them ahead of HMO managers, after all), but it's certainly not what a presidential candidate could hope for. Apparently, people respect newspaper reporters less than funeral directors—less than dentists—less, even, than governors, which is what Bill Clinton was for all those years, from the time he could shave. Still worse, when Gore changed professions and got elected to Congress, he descended to an even less popular profession: Congressmen come in 39th.

In fact, to judge by our researches, if Gore had really wanted to prepare himself for a successful campaign, he would have begun his professional life as a nurse who worked in a pharmacy and practiced veterinary medicine on the side. A degree in engineering would have been nice, too. Needless to say, this would have been yet another historic first. ♦

Till There Was Who?

We hope President Clinton wasn't offended, but it's pretty clear that some wiseacre from the DNC was trying to send a subliminally subversive message to America last Monday night. For as soon as the president had finished his rip-snorting farewell address, he was followed by a production number from the Broadway revival of *The Music Man*. *The Music Man*, of course, is the story of Professor Harold Hill, a charming conman, a mesmerizing public performer, a superlative talker, and an insatiable womanizer whose specialty is duping yokels and slipping out of tight spots. But that's where the similarities end. ♦

The Fall of the Dot Conmen

Earlier this month, we found ourselves sufficiently annoyed by Internet hype to publish a skeptical, not to say unkind, forecast for the Web's coverage of political conventions this summer ("Confessions of a Dot-Com Delegate," by Andrew Ferguson, Aug. 7, 2000). Cyberenthusiasts had been predicting all year that campaign 2000 would do for the Internet what 1952 had done for politics on television: make it an indispensable part of the way Americans absorb public affairs. All the evidence for this proposition was virtual, of course—which is to say it didn't exist, beyond the bottomless fancies of webheads and the delusional money men who succumbed to their pitch.

The returns aren't all in yet, but i looks like the enthusiasts will have tc wait another four years. Maybe eight Maybe more.

Calling the GOP convention "the first authentic Internet convention,' Thomas Patterson of Harvard's Kennedy School of Government reached a devastating conclusion in a paper published last week: "Our survey indicates that Americans had almost nc interest in experiencing the convention over the Internet." The survey was conducted by the school's Vanishing Voter Project, and the numbers are brutal. One in four respondents said they had logged onto the Web on a typical convention day. Only one in three of those one in four stumbled onto any Internet coverage of the convention. And only one in three of *those* said they had looked at the material for more than "a few seconds." Amazingly, writes Patterson, "only two respondents [from a survey pool of 1,000 adults] claimed to have visited a website dedicated to continuous convention coverage."

These conclusions won't surprise any of those lonely few who actually sought out Web coverage during the conventions, particularly on the for-profit sites devoted to politics. Wandering through the chat rooms was like yodeling down an abandoned coal mine. PseudoPolitics.com, which spent $20,000 for a skybox in Philadelphia and bragged of the legion of webjournalists it was loosing upon that hotbed of drama, drastically cut back its coverage in Los Angeles. We must hope the other for-profit sites did the same, if only for the sake of their investors.

Wait a minute. What are we saying? THE SCRAPBOOK refuses to feel sorry for lunatic venture capitalists. But our sympathies naturally fall to journalists of whatever media. So we hope those young guys and gals walking around with their webcams and the stars in

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their eyes enjoyed the conventions. They probably won't be back in 2004. ♦

The "Whenever" Puzzle Solved

THE SCRAPBOOK is delighted to learn that it is not going deaf—or at least that it's not getting any deafer than some other reputable publications. When President Clinton went barreling into his peroration on the convention's first night, we were right there, tightly gripping our ear trumpet, and we could swear his almost-final words were, "And remember, *whenever* you think about me, keep putting people first, keep building those bridges, and don't stop thinking about tomorrow."

But the next day, reading the *Boston Herald*, we discovered that the president had said "*whatever* you think about me . . ."—an oblique reference, said the *Herald*, to the Lewinsky scandal. We double-checked the transcript in the *New York Times*—the newspaper of record—and sure enough, the *Times* agreed with the *Herald* (there's a first time for everything): The president had said "Whatever . . ."

And so it went, back and forth, throughout much of convention week: whatever, whenever—witnesses seemed split into two camps. This was more than a parlor game, more than a mere diversion for the convention-addled. To THE SCRAPBOOK, an avid if amateur Clintonologist, it was a matter of some significance. If the president said "*whatever* you think about me," it constitutes more than an oblique reference to the Lewinsky scandal. It carries a whiff of modesty. It suggests a realization on his part that there are some people who don't particularly like him, and that those people are nevertheless worth addressing, if only to encourage them to pursue the president's values (building bridges, listening to Fleetwood Mac, etc.). For a man of such towering vanity, this would be a stunning concession—almost endearing. Almost.

Whenever is a different kettle of fish, however, in THE SCRAPBOOK's opinion. To say "whenever you think of me," in a valedictory address, suggests an assumption that, well, let's face it, all of you out there are going to be thinking about me an awful lot, probably won't be able to get me off your minds, in fact, and while you're thinking about me, which I know you will be, often, I'd like you to build bridges and the rest as a way of showing your vast appreciation for my wonderfulness. *Whenever*, in other words, suggests more than towering vanity; it suggests an all-consuming narcissism.

We need not add that there are many, many people who, once the president leaves office, hope never to think of him, ever again. But by week's end the answer was in. After some White House officials had suggested privately that the president had said "Whatever," the White House released the official transcript of the president's speech, answering the question once and for all: Is Bill Clinton a world-class egotist, or is he merely self-absorbed to an unappealing, and perhaps pathological, degree? It turns out that we heard right. The *Times* heard wrong (as it duly noted in a correction). He said "whenever." And we refuse to think any more about it. ♦

Compassionate Democrats?

Did you wonder why speakers at the Democratic convention were so soft-hitting in their attacks on George W. Bush? It wasn't a sudden conversion to compassionate conservatism. It was the focus groups.

In the weeks leading up to the convention, Democratic officials tried out fierce attacks on Bush and Republicans, and the folks gathered around their pollsters' tables recoiled. They were turned off by negative attacks. (Bush aides have been saying for months now that attacks won't work.)

So speakers from Bill Clinton to Jesse Jackson muted their criticism. True, Jackson called Bush an ally of "Jefferson Davis," but nobody in TV Land knows who Jefferson Davis is. More tellingly, Jackson skipped over a chunk of the negative lines in his prepared text. And he was one of the few speakers to mention Bush by name. On the other hand, some of his remarks were not-so-subtly critical of the Clinton administration's record: 45 million uninsured, no moratorium on the death penalty, a fifth of all kids living in poverty. (Time for a change!)

Democratic speechwriters, scribbling away on speech after speech, were deeply frustrated by this turn to kinder gentlerism, and you can't blame them. They came up with dozens of clever zingers for speakers to deliver. But the speakers didn't deliver them. ♦

Nader's Celebrities

Not all the movie stars were going gaga for Gore last week. The famously frosty show-biz couple Susan Sarandon and Tim Robbins appeared at the left-wing "shadow convention" to declare their support of Ralph Nader. Robbins said matter-of-factly that he's defecting from the party. And what does he like about Nader? "He can't be bought," said Robbins.

But Democrats, take heart. The pair are still reliably anti-conservative. THE SCRAPBOOK spied them after they finished a TV interview and, summoning our courage, asked for an autograph. But when Robbins realized he was autographing a WEEKLY STANDARD notepad, he grunted and pushed it away: "THE WEEKLY STANDARD? . . . Get outta here." ♦

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Casual

Golden State of Mind

Los Angeles

At a party in the Hollywood Hills the other day, I noticed that a big-time California journalist was wearing sparkles on her neck and chest, and I couldn't help thinking: Why did I just waste a week of my life in Philadelphia when I could have been out here?

In Philadelphia women don't wear sparkles on their chests; they wear Mentholatum. Philadelphia doesn't encourage that kind of *joie de vivre*; it encourages conservative investment strategies. In Philadelphia they actually seemed excited to be hosting a political convention, because there the arrival of 15,000 Republican account executives actually made the town livelier. Here in Los Angeles the locals seem eager to have us leave because the presence of so many Democrats and journalists has caused a spike in metro-area fat-to-body-mass ratios.

The fact is, Los Angeles is a much better place to hold a political convention than Philadelphia. And predictably so. The best cities for conventions are dumb and sinful. By common estimate, the best convention in recent times was held by the GOP in 1988 in New Orleans, a city rich in both vapidity and vice. New York and San Francisco, hosts of recent conventions, are sinful enough, but not stupid enough. Four years ago, San Diego and Chicago held adequate conventions because they were stupid, but not so sinful.

But here in L.A. you can really let your inner idiot run wild. In L.A., the people who host the morning news programs make the East Coast morning hosts look like the Harvard faculty. And yet, slipping into the local culture, you find yourself watching them, segment after segment, marveling at the achievements of American orthodontia, and never feeling the urge to switch to C-SPAN to see whether there might be a panel on the art of biography.

The Weekly Standard is staying at a hotel called the Avalon in Beverly Hills. The Democratic National Committee tried to assign us to one of those behemoth airport hotels, but the Democrats are using only unionized hotels, and someone in our office had the brainwave to call around to the smaller, hipper, non-unionized hotels that dot the city. The Avalon is one of those Ian Schrager-type hotels that are

Darren Gygi

relentlessly fashion forward. I've stayed at such places in New York. I hate them.

These hotels don't have normal sinks, because that would be too boring and mainstream. Instead they'll have a shallow Japanese bowl so shaped that when you turn on the water it splashes you across your shirt. They can't have normal showers, so they'll have a slate shower area with a sliding glass wall, except you can't reach the controls to adjust the temperature unless you are standing directly under the nozzle. After about ten minutes, you realize that mainstream furnishings evolved the way they did for a reason, and any deviation for the sake of style causes problems.

Here in L.A., the moral atmosphere is somehow such that being hip is worth the inconvenience. Here, I love the Avalon, which is designed in a Rat Pack mid-century-modern style and decorated in pale yellows and greens to look like one of those pre-Castro Cuban casinos where Frank Sinatra might have played. "High style meets a zen vibe at this urban hotel," reads the brochure. Here, I'm happy to wait 55 minutes for the waiter to deliver my strawberry smoothie poolside, because out here it's okay to get in touch with the shallow person within. Here, I'm thrilled to have a room that doesn't stoop to anything so prosaic as a desk (I'm typing this crouched on a *Jetsons*-era footrest). I'm thrilled to learn that Shalom Harlow, the supermodel, stays here, whereas in Philadelphia it would have been Shalom Safarti, the mohel.

Back in Philadelphia, they had lovely buildings but ugly people, while here they have ugly buildings and beautiful people. And the only disadvantage of the Southern Cal atmosphere is that some chemical in the air makes it physically impossible to care about politics.

People in my profession had better think that politics is vital and interesting. But seen through the lens of the L.A. zeitgeist, politics seems sad, especially that portion of the convention center known as Democracy Row. It's just off the media work area, and dozens of good-government foundations have little booths there, manned mostly by insanely bored interns staring into space. Something called YouThink is there, "integrating social sciences with visual arts," along with the California Voter Foundation, the National Issues Forum, and the Institute for Global Ethics.

In Philadelphia, you could pay attention to these little platoons of civic participation. Here they're a downer. Talk, talk, talk. A few nights ago, by contrast, some colleagues got together out by the pool at the Avalon, and we found ourselves discussing how Bush will fare among Capricorns.

It's great to go native.

David Brooks

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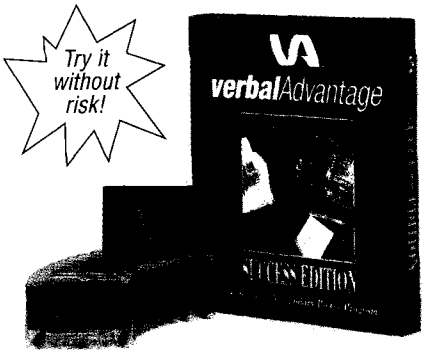

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Serious, Not Stupid

When I read Matt Labash's article, "The Other, Stupider Convention" (Aug. 14), I was so overwhelmed by his misrepresentation of the facts, his obvious bias against anything not apple-pie mainstream, and his childish characterization of participants in the Shadow Convention that I began to think I could find a more accurate depiction of the event from a *South Park* episode than from his article. It seems that before Labash entered the doors of the Annenberg Center, his mind was so laden with prejudice against the event that, no matter what he saw, he was bound to report on it with a cynical, snide slant.

I resent that Labash refers to people who advocate change because they are dissatisfied with the current political climate as "flared-nostril revolutionar[ies] and bleeding-ulcer moderate[s]." This is exactly the kind of black-or-white extremism in the American media and politics that makes reasoned, carefully thought out dialogue impossible. In its place we have public officials who do not dare question the status quo for fear they will be branded bleeding-heart liberals or soft on crime. The result is two national conventions, Republican and Democrat, which Labash himself admits "aren't addressing any issues."

The Shadow Conventions are exactly what we need to help get people involved in political issues that affect their lives and to overcome public apathy toward American politics. The public is becoming increasingly disenchanted with the political process as they see the major parties failing to address issues such as campaign finance reform, the failing war on drugs, and the increasing disparity in the distribution of wealth. Arianna Huffington and the participants in the Shadow Convention should be applauded for putting together an event that addresses issues that matter.

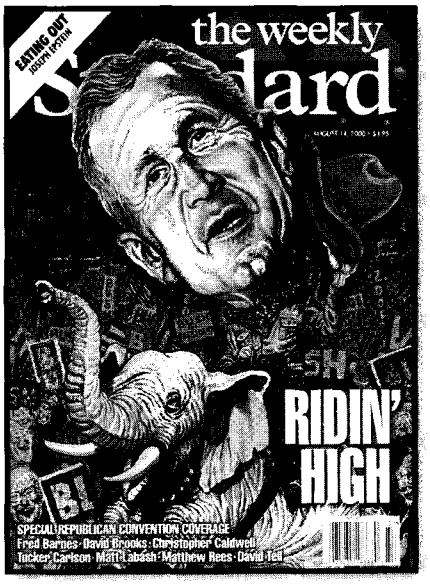
Jaime Yassif
Swarthmore, PA

Isn't Matt Labash an entertaining fellow? His piece on the Shadow Convention was a puerile and lazy attempt at humor mocking those who decided to get involved. I am one of those "bleeding-ulcer moderate[s]" and proud of it.

Labash's reputation does not precede him so I can't rejoin with witticisms about his physical traits, style of dress, intestinal status, age, hearing, race, or any of the other attributes he uses to describe the committed citizens who took the time to attend. But I will let Labash's own unabashed name-dropping suffice as my lone jab at the man. Quite pitiful.

Not all of us have left our ideals behind and many others have begun to reflect on what was gained in the intervening decades without the rudder provided by those ideals.

Dave Michon
Spooner, WI



I read with moderate amusement Matt Labash's snarky sendup of the Shadow Convention. Alas, it would appear that Labash is a poster child for the self-involved boomer movement. He ends his piece with the lines: "A seed was planted, a dialogue started. Never mind if it's a dialogue many of us gave up on long ago—when we left our dorm rooms, bad weed, and jug wine behind."

Maybe that wasn't such a good thing, considering the way things have turned out since Labash "grew up." We have more of our citizens in jail than most other countries in the world. Our crime rate is multiples of the rates in other industrialized countries. We spend vast amounts of taxpayer money on incarcerating users of politically incorrect drugs. Worst of all, the Constitution is in an advanced state of decay, eaten away by the necessities of the drug war.

If I had to guess, I'd say that the reason Labash didn't see more significance in the Shadow Convention was that he was too busy agonizing over the terrible injustice of Al Franken's fame and Matt Labash's obscurity.

Ray Aldridge
Ft. Walton Beach, FL

Matt Labash's incisive piece on the Shadow Convention was just about what one would expect from a jerk who left "bad weed and jug wine" behind in his college dorm. All those angry people upset because Vanilla Gore and Vanilla-Lite Bush don't seem to want to discuss anything but "Why Johnny Can Read in Dallas" and the most compassionate way of putting retarded folk down in the Lone Star State. Guess I see the point: Why would anyone as supercilious as Labash want the two major political parties to discuss anything of substance? He might have to familiarize himself with actual issues instead of strolling around making derisive yet delightfully wry comments.

Robert Lewis
Kansas City, MO

Not Out of the Woods

The Republican platform committee's exercise in Soviet-style democratic centralism described by Tucker Carlson bodes well for the Bush campaign but ill for a Bush presidency ("The Well-Tempered GOP Platform," Aug. 7). The Republicans' "streamlined" platform hearing process complements well the abbreviated speeches, video montages, and uplifting nightly themes that have provided recent nominees with the ersatz displays of party unity they need to launch successful general election campaigns.

But such lifeless conventions are not only bad television, they are bad politics. The differences among Republicans over issues like abortion, entitlement reform, and environmental policy that Bush elided during the convention will not remain submerged. They will surely resurface

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during a Bush presidency when factional conflict may erode Bush's political support and perhaps trigger memories of another former southern governor who believed that appeals to "compassion" could obviate the need for debate and compromise.

RONALD P. SEYB
Saratoga Springs, NY

DON'T DEBUNK DARWIN

ONCE AGAIN fellow conservatives have embraced populist anti-intellectualism in the conflict over education standards in Kansas (Jack Cashill, "The Natural Selection Election," July 31). The state board of education under chairman Linda Holloway may have "merely" deleted evolution, the Big Bang, and other "contested theories" from the state assessment tests, but we well know the major effects these decisions have in the classrooms. Teachers teach to the tests because money and reputations depend on the results.

The board knew exactly what it was doing by virtually eliminating evolution from the schools while still being able to claim there is no "ban." A complete education for Kansas students will only be possible when a new board reverses these regrettable actions. Conservatives are far better served by learning the truth about life and the universe than by hiding in sophistry.

MARK A. WILSON
Wooster, OH

WHAT NEXT? Coddling the cultural sensibilities of those who believe they have been abducted by space aliens? Voters who reject the evidence of evolution by natural selection in favor of "creation science" are not conservative, just ignorant.

Holloway's supporters may indeed "read voraciously," but an intellectual diet rich with pseudo-scientific books that pick straws with modern biology doesn't produce informed voters. I have no desire to exile grass-roots creationists from the conservative movement. People ought to be free to believe what they want. But is it really a good idea for conservatives to defend the insinuation of a faith-based attack on scientific fact into school curricula?

For what it is worth, contrary to Jack Cashill, the Darwinian theory of evolution through natural selection is not "on the verge of collapse." Since Darwin published *The Origin of Species* (1859) and *The Descent of Man* (1874), his theory of evolution has been modified and extended by thousands of scientific advances in genetics, paleontology, and anthropology. But the essentials of his theory have stood the test of time.

PETER WOOD
Boston, MA

JACK CASHILL WRITES that the "holes" in Darwinism "are large and growing larger. Some in the intelligent design movement believe Darwinism may be on the verge of collapse." The reality is, Darwinism has proven to be a very successful scientific theory. The evolutionary family tree of species Darwin and his collaborators posited solely on the basis of gross anatomy is now being corroborated at the level of DNA.

Thus, the theory is growing stronger, not weaker, and conservatives make fools of themselves insisting otherwise. Whether it should be taught in public schools is another matter. If liberals took the First Amendment as seriously as they pretend, they would ban public education as a kind of government-forced speech.

TARAS WOLANSKY
Jersey City, NJ

THE JEWISH QUESTION

IS IT FAIR to report a terrible accusation against a person without noting the charge's falsity? The first paragraph of John J. DiIulio Jr.'s "What Is Compassionate Conservatism?" reported that I had made remarks "that were taken as anti-Semitic" (Aug. 7).

This is an ugly charge without any basis that was circulated before the New York primary, when supporters of George W. Bush such as myself were being accused of all sorts of biases. I had hoped that the evidence—for years I have praised, not decried, Jewish charities, and have repeatedly called for closer relations between Jews and Christians—had laid to rest such an accusation.

MARVIN OLASKY
Austin, TX

JOHN J. DIIULIO JR. RESPONDS: I opened my long review of Marvin Olasky's book by noting that, having "slipped from view" after "Newt Gingrich's political demise," Olasky "has been back in the news lately for penning remarks about 'the religion of Zeus' that were taken as anti-Semitic," among other controversies. In the very next line I noted that Gov. Bush has praised Olasky as "compassionate conservatism's leading thinker." And while the review outlined my profound disagreement with Olasky's view that government social programs can and should be replaced almost entirely by religious charities and other private groups, I also noted that former Indianapolis mayor Steven Goldsmith has praised Olasky's work, and I praised it myself ("brilliantly profiles," "wisely concludes," "I join Olasky"). I helped to set up several of Olasky's visits to local churches and I have always judged him to be a superb journalist and a dear, public-spirited man with a good heart. Pace Olasky's letter, however, imagine that I had added something like "But the charge is false because Olasky has praised, not decried, Jewish charities and repeatedly called for closer relations between Jews and Christians." Whether the charge was politically motivated or not, it simply would never occur to me to dignify it by citing such "evidence" as dispositive. Still, I am truly sorry if my innocent passing reference to his recent controversies offended him so.

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the weekly Standard

Four Gore Years?

Nearly the whole of his life has been a lie, but on the first night of last week's Democratic convention, Bill Clinton nevertheless bestirred himself and spoke the truth. He identified more directly and completely than anyone else possibly could the central point of reference in the coming campaign, the single issue that will most determine the winner. It is *his* issue, after all, Clinton's lifelong and loving preoccupation. The issue is: him.

The president spoke—and spoke and spoke and spoke, for nearly an hour—about himself, hardly mentioning the loyal son whom he was supposed to be ushering into political adulthood. Al Gore? He was "one of the best decisions of my life." *My* decision. *My* life. Me, me, me. Twelve hours later, at the convention's off-site transition ceremony in Michigan, Clinton all but emasculated Gore, shamelessly camera-mugging in the background while his badly upstaged protégé struggled at the microphone for some scrap of attention.

Awful behavior, yes, but that is not the point. It is an unavoidable fact: Bill Clinton is the magnetic north of our public life, the figure all other politicians must define themselves against. He would have dominated the Los Angeles convention even had he not shown up. Just as he will dominate the entire campaign, right up to its waning moments, even if he somehow manages to stay invisible.

Gore and his party would obviously like Clinton to disappear. The convention keynoter, Rep. Harold Ford, ran off a great many words about the vice president's multiform virtues, but never once referred to the vice president's current boss. Neither did anyone else on Tuesday's program. Neither did anyone on Wednesday's program—not so's you'd notice, anyhow. And neither did Al Gore himself in his acceptance speech on Thursday, except in a single sentence of impersonal thanks, delivered on behalf of "millions of Americans," for "the job" Clinton has done. In the course of that "job," though, Clinton got himself impeached. Rather embarrassing.

Los Angeles's stagecrafters were intent to establish that Al Gore is not Bill Clinton. Gore loves his wife. She loves him. He loves his daughter. She loves him, too. Once upon a time, Gore even used to help his daughter Karenna with her elementary school homework—just like a real-life father would! Whatta guy.

A guy, but not a terribly effective politician, it turns out. Bill Clinton refashioned his party in the image of his own ambition—and called the confection a "third way," something "new." Gore's grip is looser, the Los Angeles convention suggests. For last week, the real Democratic party, kept firmly locked in Clinton's strategic closet these past eight years, finally wandered back into the sunlight. Watch that podium: The Democratic Leadership Council is dead. Long live . . .

Richard Trumka of the United Mine Workers and John Sweeney of the AFL-CIO and teachers' union president Bob Chase and public employees' union president Gerald McEntee. And Jesse Jackson and Kweisi Mfume. And one, two, three, four, *five* members of the Kennedy family. And Eleanor Holmes Norton, non-voting delegate to the House of Representatives from the nation's capital. And Elizabeth Birch of the Human Rights Campaign. And Kate Michelman of NARAL.

If you believe it is important that the District of Columbia be the 51st state—and that women be allowed to marry each other and undergo partial-birth abortions, though not necessarily in that order—then you really must vote for Gore.

In any other season, this would seem an altogether bizarre advertising theme for a major-party presidential candidate to have chosen. Had the Philadelphia Republican convention been half so "out of the mainstream" as this, George W. Bush would have been preceded to the stage by Randall Terry, Jesse Helms, Charlton Heston, Jerry Falwell, the CEOs of Philip Morris, Dow, and Eli Lilly. *And* Linda Tripp. But Bush and his allies, though out of power and new to the national scene, were stiff-necked enough to prevent any such fiasco. Indeed, they scripted a seamless event. The incumbent vice president, by contrast, accepting his party's nomination at a moment of unparalleled national strength and prosperity, nevertheless felt forced, like the ghost of Walter Mondale, to declare populist war on those "powerful forces" that are stealing bread from the mouths of America's starving children.

The Gore campaign has been hemorrhaging for months. Every public opinion poll has been the same. Gore trails Bush among men. He trails among women. He trails among independents. He trails on bedrock questions of leadership, honesty, likability, national defense, even

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education. He trails so badly, in fact, that he is now forced to beg even grass-roots Democratic support.

And Gore trails this way because he is Bill Clinton's vice president. Period. Nearly half the country says Gore is too much implicated in Clinton's debasement of the Oval Office to steward their desired future. These same voters, in a different poll but on the same grounds, say there now is "no chance whatsoever" they will vote for Gore. Gore sinks in quicksand.

We think he did little to pull himself out last week. Gore's acceptance speech was poorly organized, cycling back over essentially the same topical territory three times, by our count. It was poorly written and poorly delivered; Gore rushed so quickly over what few classic applause lines his speech contained that the convention audience had to be prompted by closed-circuit television monitors to respond at all. And, worst, for all its programmatic detail, the speech was almost empty of content about what should have been its principal subject: the campaign Gore is now engaged in. This failure, too, can be attributed to . . . Bill Clinton.

Al Gore's strongest qualification for the presidency is his service in an incumbent administration that has coincided with eight happy years of American history. But it is Clinton's administration, and Clinton was impeached, and Gore is too timid to repudiate or even acknowledge his boss's grossest misdeeds. So instead, Gore all but pretends that the Clinton administration never took place—thereby depriving himself of the ability to brag about that administration's apparently successful policies. Gore's acceptance speech devoted just one sentence to a reminder of how bad things were before he became vice president—during the regime of his opponent's father, that is. You'd have thought he'd want to elaborate on the subsequent recovery. But no: Gore outright denied it was relevant. This year's presidential election, he said, is "not an award for past performance."

What is it, then? Is it a choice between two very different prescriptions for the next four years of our collective life, one Republican and one Democratic, one Bush's and one Gore's? No, it is not even that, not very much. "This is not just an election between my opponent and me," Gore announced. "It's about our people." So he did not utter the word "Republican." And he did not utter the name "Bush." That would have been "negative" and voters dislike politicians who are negative, a result Al Gore simply can't afford. Too many voters already dislike him, you see, because . . . well, again, because they associate him with you know who.

"I will never let you down," Gore promised toward the end, in the brief passage of his speech that came closest to an explicit acknowledgment of the "Clinton problem." Gore made another, implicit reference to the president, though. Few people have remarked on it, but we think it was much the most important thing Gore said last Thursday—the clearest indication he gave of how completely Bill Clinton's legacy is distorting his campaign, and how unsuccessful has been his attempt to escape that legacy.

There is a "word that we've heard a lot of in this campaign," the vice president pointed out, "and that word is honor." Honor is "not just a word," Gore went on, "but an obligation." What kind of obligation, exactly? An obligation to . . . raise the minimum wage, provide federally funded day care, defend affirmative action, protect *Roe* v. *Wade*, advance gay rights, and enact hate crimes legislation. Honor, in other words, resides in the policies a leader supports. Honor does *not*, by unmistakable inference, mean obeying the law and telling the truth and carefully husbanding the historical inheritance and reputation of the American presidency.

It is precisely this view of honor, Bill Clinton's view of honor, that American voters appear to be rejecting as they lean toward George W. Bush. At his Los Angeles convention, Al Gore declined the opportunity to reject it with them. He embraced Clintonian "honor" instead. For all Gore's frantic effort to push him out of view, Clinton and Clintonism remain the fundamental issue in this year's election.

—*William Kristol and David Tell*

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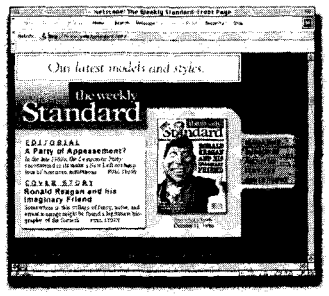

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Troubled Waters

Joe Lieberman's Maxine problem.

BY CHRISTOPHER CALDWELL

Los Angeles

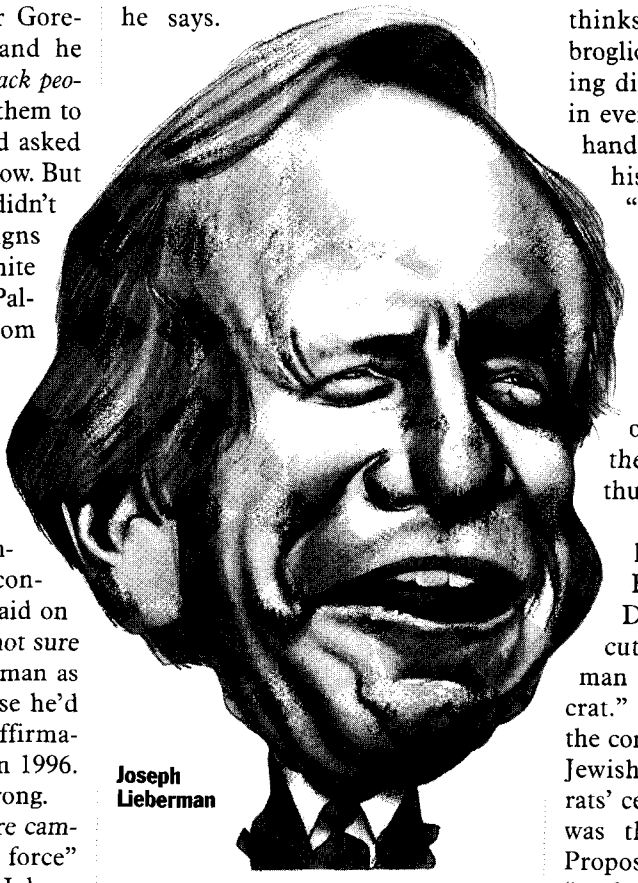
JESSE JACKSON was just minutes into his address to the Democratic convention last Tuesday night when a long-haired, white Democratic operative started rushing up and down the aisles of the California delegation. He was carrying a pile of cardboard made-for-TV placards that said "African Americans for Gore-Lieberman." He was late, and he couldn't very well say, *Any black people want these?* So he handed them to the delegates on the aisle and asked them to pass them down the row. But the mostly white delegation didn't get it. As a result, the signs wound up being waved by white schoolteachers from Pacific Palisades and white firemen from Fresno.

Confusion about who speaks for black voters in the Democratic party was, to the Gore campaign's chagrin, the story that dominated the first two days of the convention. L.A.'s inner-city congresswoman Maxine Waters said on convention eve that she was not sure she could support Joe Lieberman as vice president, largely because he'd supported California's anti-affirmative-action Proposition 209 in 1996. Reactions were sudden and strong.

There was panic in the Gore campaign, which set up a "task force" under D.C. delegate Eleanor Holmes Norton and labor secretary Alexis Herman to "sell" Lieberman to their fellow blacks. And there was scandal-fanning *Schadenfreude* from the press, queasy because Waters appeals to the same angry inner-city constituents as Louis Farrakhan, the country's most conspicuous anti-Semite.

Christopher Caldwell is senior writer at THE WEEKLY STANDARD.

While Waters has no record of specific hostility to Jews, early press reports portrayed the confrontation in strictly racial terms. This may not have been fair, according to one longtime liberal Senate staffer, but it *was* Gore's fault. "The way the Lieberman pick was handled by Gore set the stage for this," he says.



Joseph Lieberman

"Treating it as an 'ethnic breakthrough' was probably unnecessary, and even wrong, given the heights Jews have already reached in politics." There *were* differences on the issues between Waters and Lieberman, but the public had no way of knowing that until the story had already run for 48 hours. By the time Gore sent Norton and Herman out as emissaries, he had basically tutored American voters to view the response as a race-obsessed Democratic party sending two blacks to calm down other blacks who were mad about a Jew.

"What you're seeing about Maxine is ideological, not ethnic," says Cal State Fullerton political scientist Raphael Sonenshein, a longtime top aide to Waters and author of *Politics in Black and White* (a study of how black-Jewish coalitions provided the power base for L.A. mayor Tom Bradley). "If Gore had picked Paul Wellstone—to take someone on her wing of the party—you wouldn't have heard from her." Sonenshein thinks the Waters-Lieberman imbroglio is the kind of coalition-firming difficulty Democrats encounter in every race, and even thinks Gore handled it in a more gutsy way than his predecessors would have. "Sending Alexis Herman and Eleanor Holmes Norton to help everyone live with a pick he'd already made is not pandering, it's the opposite. Pandering is what used to happen when a candidate sent aides out to meet Mayor Daley *before* the pick, and waited for his thumbs-up."

The rationale Sonenshein lays out is an honorable one. But since it rests on classic Democratic politics, it undercuts Gore's claims that Lieberman is a "different kind of Democrat." The long-term damage from the controversy may be not to black-Jewish relations but to the Democrats' centrist image. Herman's claim was that Lieberman had backed Proposition 209 because he hadn't "understood" it. Last Tuesday, Lieberman went before the DNC's Black Caucus and (metaphorically) signed the confession Herman had prepared for him. He said he hadn't realized that 209 would do away with affirmative action. But back then, Lieberman was such a scathing critic of preferences that he even received a dressing-down from Jesse Jackson. No matter: "I have supported affirmative action," he told the Black

Illustration by Thomas Fluharty

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Caucus, "I do support affirmative action, and I will support affirmative action." Lieberman's abject appeals secured a promise from Waters to campaign with him, but showed him to be a moderate in style only—wholly available to the race-counting left in substance.

Lieberman has often won in battles with the party's left, but this week's events have shed light on just how "stylistic" those victories were. For instance, the Waters-Lieberman spat is a mirror image of the give-and-take last November between Lieberman and Gore-campaign manager Donna Brazile. Back then, Lieberman played today's Waters, and Brazile played Lieberman. Brazile announced that the Democratic party had "four pillars"—women, blacks, labor, and minorities. Most in the conservative Democratic Leadership Council considered Brazile's remark a swing-voter-repelling catastrophe, but it was Lieberman who as DLC chairman took the hardest line, appearing on television and radio over the next few days to denounce it. "Those are activist groups, but they don't constitute the Democratic party," he said, "and they certainly don't constitute a majority of the country." But he gave Brazile a total pass by pronouncing her words meaningless: He issued a statement that "the comments of Donna Brazile were not a reflection of what the Gore campaign is doing." (Oh, no, she was only *running* it!) This is exactly what Alexis Herman was doing in Los Angeles when she announced that Joseph Lieberman's positions, because of his weak "understanding," were no reflection of what Joseph Lieberman believes.

Lieberman's cease-fire with Brazile was strange behavior for the head of the DLC, which reacted to the Four Pillars gaffe by warning that Brazile's "'base constituency group' strategy was central to the failed Democratic presidential campaigns of the 1980s." At the Democratic convention, Lieberman made a pact to restore the strategy he once so eloquently condemned. ♦

The Loneliness of the Pro-Life Democrat

Pennsylvania's Senate candidate Ron Klink gets the cold shoulder from his party. BY FRED BARNES

Los Angeles

ON THE FINAL DAY of last week's convention, Democrats honored the late Bob Casey, the two-term governor of Pennsylvania and the party's leading opponent of abortion. But don't get the wrong idea. During his lifetime, Casey was treated as a pariah by the national Democratic party—especially at the 1992 convention in New York that nominated Bill Clinton for president. And being a pro-life Democrat is still one of the toughest and loneliest jobs in American politics.

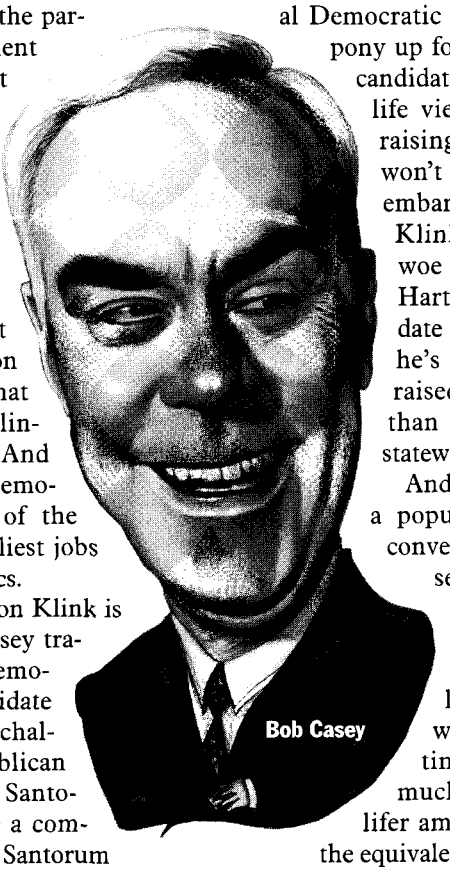
Bob Casey

Illustration by Earl Keleny

Congressman Ron Klink is running in the Casey tradition as the Democratic Senate candidate in Pennsylvania, challenging Republican incumbent Rick Santorum. It should be a competitive race since Santorum is more conservative than anyone elected statewide in Pennsylvania in decades. And there are 500,000 more registered Democrats in the state than Republicans. Yet Santorum has held a 20 percentage point lead over Klink for months.

Why? One reason is that Santorum is a smart politician who's cleverly drifted toward the political center as his reelection bid approached. But another reason, perhaps more important, is money. Santorum is outraising and outspending Klink by roughly seven to one. Klink's problem: Liberal Democratic donors just won't pony up for an anti-abortion candidate. Asked if his pro-life views impede fund-raising, Klink says, "I won't kid you. Yes." An embarrassing fact about Klink's fund-raising woe is that Melissa Hart, the GOP candidate for the House seat he's vacating, has raised more money than he has for his statewide race.

And Klink was hardly a popular figure at the convention. Democratic senator Barbara Boxer of California took him to a gathering of Hollywood liberals where he passed the tin cup without much success. A pro-lifer among that crowd is the equivalent of Billy Graham at the Playboy Mansion—not exactly welcome.

Here's how Jon Delano, the political commentator for KDKA television in Pittsburgh, explained Klink's difficulty in Pennsylvania: "Most of the Democratic money comes from Philadelphia. Most of that money is liberal Democratic money. Certainly Ron Klink's position as pro-life and pro-gun has hurt him." Even Democratic senators who want him to win so they can take control of the Senate

Fred Barnes is executive editor of THE WEEKLY STANDARD.

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(now 54-46 Republican) aren't enthusiastic about Klink. "He doesn't excite me," says Sen. Mary Landrieu of Louisiana, "but he's better than Santorum."

Klink insists he has some advantages in the race. "We start with a tremendous infrastructure," he says. "The Democratic machine has come together." He has "the best and most excited labor support since 1991, when Harris Wofford ran [for the Senate] against Dick Thornburgh." Wofford won that special election, only to lose the seat to Santorum in the Republican landslide in 1994. Another advantage, he says, is that Santorum is not just a little, but a lot, more conservative than the state. Klink believes he can use Social Security, Medicare, and a patients' bill of rights as issues against Santorum.

"The electoral profile of Ron Klink is someone who can win," he says. "The electoral profile of someone who can raise money in Philadelphia is somebody else." Yet he claims it's not impossible for him to solicit money from Philadelphia liberals. "It just takes more time and effort. You get in the door when you say you're running against Rick Santorum." Still, he's got to meet one-on-one with pro-choice Democrats for them to open their pocketbooks. He points out he's not a pro-life absolutist like Santorum, who led the Senate fight to ban partial-birth abortion. "It does not become a litmus test issue [for me]," Klink says. He's voted to fund family planning organizations, some of which perform abortions. And he's for exceptions to an abortion ban—life of the mother, rape, incest.

Klink now spends 90 percent of his time campaigning and fund-raising in eastern Pennsylvania, where he's not well known. He won the Democratic primary almost entirely on the strength of votes from western Pennsylvania. His district is just outside Pittsburgh. Now, he desperately needs the money for TV spots to boost his name ID across the state. To run a competitive race, Klink says he needs $6 million to $7 million. "Can you do it for less? Yes, you can." He'll probably have to. As of June 30, Santorum had $4.3 million on hand—while Klink had only $564,520. That figure doesn't include the take at a Philadelphia fund-raiser for Klink attended by President Clinton last month. He expects another big haul when some or all of the six female Democratic senators speak at a rally for him.

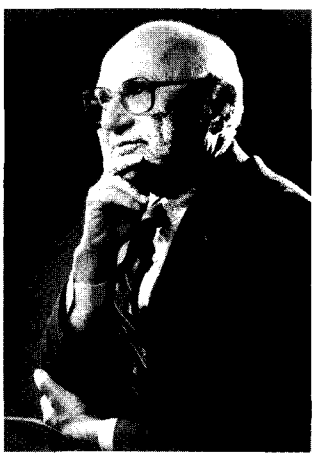
At the convention, the Casey tribute represented only a fleeting break with the Democratic party's rigid adherence to abortion on demand. Gore was unequivocally pro-abortion in his acceptance speech. "The last thing this country needs is a Supreme Court that overturns *Roe* v. *Wade*," he declared. Unlike the speech Tuesday night by Kate Michelman of the National Abortion and Reproductive Rights Action League, the Casey tribute didn't occur in prime time. Two of Casey's sons—Pennsylvania state auditor Bob Casey Jr. and congressional candidate Pat Casey—spoke to a sparsely filled hall and a three-minute video was shown.

Some Democrats, notably Al Gore, regret the way Bob Casey Sr. was treated at the 1992 convention. Of course they did nothing at the time to protect Casey from being muzzled. His delegation was stashed in a far corner of Madison Square Garden, and he was denied a chance to address the gathering simply because he intended to air his opposition to abortion. Meanwhile, his pro-choice Republican opponent for governor two years earlier, Barbara Hafer, was allowed to address the Democratic convention.

Bob Casey Jr. says the idea for the tribute came from Gore and his political strategist Bob Shrum. Gore, of course, is eager to appeal to conservative, pro-life Catholics who are an important swing vote in the presidential election. Casey Jr. isn't ready to proclaim an era of tolerance of pro-lifers inside the Democratic party. "Nationally I don't know," he says. "It's a lot easier as a state politician to be pro-life than it would be as a national politician." Gore, an ally of pro-lifers when he was still in Congress, can attest to that. ♦

Nobel Prize Winning Author

Milton Friedman



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A Good Convention . . . for the GOP

Among the biggest fans of the convention are the GOP truth-squadders. BY MATTHEW REES

Los Angeles

"THIS WAS NOT a happy convention." So said a leading Democratic strategist after attending the proceedings here. The problems? Everything from Al Gore's sagging image to the police-state environment outside the Staples Center. But the fundamental problem, said the strategist, is that "there's little enthusiasm for Gore." How bad was it? "It had the feel of the 1984 Democratic convention, where everyone knew we were going to lose." The chief difference, adds the strategist, is that "delegates at least had warm feelings for Walter Mondale."

The results from a nightly tracking poll conducted by Voter.com bear out this pessimism. The week began with Bush leading Gore 41 percent to 33 percent, and after Wednesday night his lead had grown: 44 percent to 32 percent. Gore made up 4 points Thursday night with his acceptance speech, but that still left him trailing Bush by 8 points, 42 percent to 34 percent, the same margin as before the convention began.

Other poll numbers are just as troubling for Gore. Bill McInturff of Public Opinion Strategies says his polls show 11 percent of those who voted for Bill Clinton in 1996 aren't voting for Gore, citing fatigue with the administration's ethical problems and a belief that Gore is not strong enough to be president. And a *USA Today* poll taken on the eve of the convention found 47 percent of those surveyed saying there was no chance whatsoever that they would vote for Gore. Neither Bob Dole in 1996 nor George Bush in 1992 had a negative rating this high at this stage in the campaign.

Republicans are, naturally, giddy. While some, like Scott Reed, Dole's campaign manager four years ago, believe the Gore speech was effective, many believe that with its tub-thumping liberalism it will hamper the vice president's ability to reach out to independents and moderate Democrats. Jim Gilmore, the Republican governor of Virginia, branded it "angry," "full of rage," "divisive," and "appealing to people's worst instincts, hatreds, and fears."

Gilmore was here as one of the leaders of the GOP's "Truth Squad," which in addition to rebutting Democratic attacks on Bush previewed some of the general-election themes Republicans are likely to be using against Gore. With Loretta Sanchez, Jesse Jackson, Ted Kennedy, and the Clintons dominating the first two nights of the convention, GOP operatives were overwhelmed with material. (Pat Harrison, co-chair of the Republican National Committee, may have delivered the best line of the entire event when she described it as "a combination of *Boogie Nights* and *Elmer Gantry*.") And they used it to raise even more doubts about Al Gore, while sticking to the Bush campaign's policy against personal attacks.

The Truth Squad, cleverly using the language of the software industry, dubbed the Los Angeles confab a "reinvention convention" where Gore was rolling out "Version 8.0" of his makeover. Version 1.0, launched in March 1999, had Gore posturing as an "Average Joe" who grew up on a farm in Tennessee and owned a small business. Gore, in the Republicans' telling, was then remade as an "underdog" against Bill Bradley (2.0), as an "alpha male" (3.0), and as a "thinking man with a heart" (6.0). So GOP chairman Jim Nicholson, speaking at a press conference Wednesday morning, felt entitled to ask: "Who is Al Gore? What does he stand for?"

Another "reinvention convention" ploy, said the GOP Truth Squad, was to rewrite the Clinton administration's record on the economy, welfare reform, Medicare, and education. Far from being a renaissance, as Democrats claim, the Clinton-Gore years were a period of "squandered opportunities." The GOP research team, led by Barbara Comstock, produced reams of quotations and statistics to buttress the argument. But it got an unexpected assist from Bill Bradley Tuesday night. While wanly reiterating his support for Gore, he devoted much of his speech to what ails America, citing 44 million people without health insurance and undiminished child poverty. Republicans pounced. Gilmore of Virginia celebrated Bradley as "an eloquent spokesman for the failures of the past eight years."

Bradley's speech also bolstered Republican efforts to portray Gore and his supporters as wedded to slash-and-burn politics. In the opening moments of his speech, Bradley remarked, "For 15 months I ran for president . . . and I have the scars to prove it." And when Jesse Jackson launched a series of hyperbolic attacks on George W. Bush—"he chose the Confederate flag over the American flag"—Republicans derided it as evidence of the Democrats' "old-style attack politics."

The selection of Joe Lieberman, which initially vexed Republicans, also emerged as a GOP talking point against Gore. Lieberman's departures from Democratic orthodoxy on education, racial preferences, tort reform, and Hollywood were fodder for press releases with titles like, "Los Angeles Hit by Tremors in Al Gore's Base." And with the supposedly principled senator trimming his positions on these issues and making nice with Maxine Waters and the entertainment industry, Republicans portrayed him

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as just another Gore-style flip-flopper. "We're saying free Joe Lieberman," quipped Ken Blackwell, Ohio's secretary of state, who was in Los Angeles as part of the GOP Truth Squad. "Let Joe be Joe." Added Dave Schnittger, a Republican spokesman: "The Lieberman pick raised the question whether he would raise Gore up, or Gore would drag him down. The answer is now obvious."

The Heritage Foundation's Marshall Wittmann says the Democratic convention had "the feel and the odor of the 1992 Republican convention." Indeed, just as the GOP trotted out one conservative after another at that gathering, in a ham-handed attempt to compensate for the Bush administration's squishiness, Gore deployed old-guard liberals Ted Kennedy and Jesse Jackson. Their prime-time appearances Tuesday evening reinforced the "reinvention convention" theme, with Republican spokesmen quick to point out that these liberals, representative of the party's past, all opposed what Gore likes to cite as among the Clinton administration's greatest achievements: balanced budgets and welfare reform. "It's one step to the middle," read a GOP press release, "and three steps back to the old liberal left."

Jackson was one of many convention speakers who tried to zing Bush by portraying Texas as a virtual Third World nation. Republicans responded by rolling out a claque of current and former Democratic elected officials from Texas, who spent the week touting Bush's record and dismissing the attacks as baseless. They are going to remain active for Bush, with the Bush campaign set to launch a high-profile effort to win over Democrats and independents.

The effectiveness of these themes won't become entirely clear until after Labor Day, but with early polling suggesting Gore gained little from the convention, Republicans are feeling more confident of victory. Says Harrison of the Republican National Committee, trying out a line that one suspects will find its way into GOP talking points: "Our long national soap opera is almost over." ♦

From Riordan to Bush

Los Angeles is the true capital of compassionate conservatism. BY CHRISTOPHER CALDWELL

Los Angeles

THERE WAS a curious symmetry about the settings of this year's party conventions. Republicans picked Philadelphia, whose mayor Edward Rendell spent the 1990s turning his city into a showcase of the very New Democrat leadership that the GOP wants voters to reject. Democrats, meanwhile, who couldn't have predicted Republicans' campaign themes when they picked Los Angeles, wound up in what could be the birthplace of George W. Bush's "compassionate conservatism."

Republican Richard Riordan was elected mayor of Los Angeles in 1993, months after the most deadly race riot of recent years led a lot of L.A. residents to question whether comity among the city's galaxy of ethnic groups was a lost cause (and led 400,000 of them to buy guns in the days after the violence). Riordan ran on the motto "Tough Enough to Turn L.A. Around." But within days of his taking office, it was apparent that "tough" applied only as the adjective in "tough love."

And if it was tough, it wasn't right-wing. Riordan opened up the highest ranks of City Hall to gays, Mexicans, blacks—and in general bent over backwards to build the broadest American city-government coalition in living memory. Southern California conservatives soon dismissed him with the epithet R(h)INO (Republican in Name Only). But his administration proved overwhelmingly popular. Riordan won a number of non-traditional ethnic constituencies into the GOP: He won Jews, Latinos, and Asians in 1997, to secure his reelection against a weak challenge from Tom Hayden.

Thus, the one project George W. Bush claims to want most passionately to carry out—assembling a new Republican coalition across race, class, sex, and even party lines—is something only Richard Riordan has done. Are there lessons Bush can take out of Los Angeles?

Rocky Delgadillo, the Mexican-American Democrat who serves as Riordan's deputy mayor for economic development, rejects the idea that there's any obvious connection between the Los Angeles mayor's governing and what Bush envisions. "The only adjective we're interested in applying to this administration is *effective*," says Delgadillo. He describes his job as "using the greatest power on the planet—the economy—to address social ills." Delgadillo worked with '84 Olympics impresario and ex-MLB commissioner Peter Ueberroth at Rebuild L.A., a series of job-creating, infrastructure-building partnerships between big corporations and community groups. His latest project is the Genesis L.A. plan managed by Stan Gold of Shamrock Partners (Roy Disney's company), which uses similar partnerships but focuses on inner-city neighborhoods.

It seems inevitable that Bush will wind up using some similar approach if his compassion ever moves from rhetoric to programs. The Riordan model has the advantage of keeping (traditionally Republican) boardrooms happy while convincing (traditionally Democratic) underprivileged voters that a booming economy has

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something to offer them, too. Nor does it exclude the sort of cooperation with religious institutions Bush has urged. Riordan's rapport with Mexican Americans stems from years of (largely Catholic Church-based) charitable work in inner-city neighborhoods.

On the downside, this is a model that doesn't require a Republican to administer it. Former California assembly speaker Antonio Villaraigosa has put together a coalition that could make him Riordan's successor. That coalition is pro-growth, pro-labor, and pro-Latino. Said one Democrat during the convention, "Riordan has revived L.A. to the extent that the Democrats may be inclined to take it back."

Peter Skerry, a political scientist at Claremont McKenna University who is the author of the definitive book on Mexican-American politics, agrees that public-private partnerships have been a big tool in wooing Latinos. But, Skerry adds, "If compassionate is going to mean appealing to Latinos, a lot is going to depend on the state of the immigration issue. Bush may have a harder time finessing it."

Skerry points to increasingly strident arguments between immigration advocates and foes over "amnesties" for undocumented aliens. Even pro-immigration activists used to countenance the drawing of a sharp line between legal immigrants and illegal ones. They no longer do, and the sudden emergence of the AFL-CIO as a deep-pocketed supporter of amnesty, after its successful drive to recruit undocumented aliens, has changed the dynamic of the issue. What's more, Mexico's president-elect, Vicente Fox—a traditional hero of American conservatives for his efforts to topple Mexico's one-party oligarchy—has recently floated an economic growth program for his country that involves freer movement of labor northward.

The big problem is not Mexicans' loyalty to Democrats but the GOP's extreme disloyalty to Mexicans. Republicans have been punished for the excesses of Pete Wilson, whose sponsorship of Proposition 187 and incendiary tone on immigration matters riled Latino voters at exactly the moment when the white working-class voters to whom he was seeking to appeal were leaving the state in droves. Defeat after electoral defeat has meant the GOP's virtual disappearance as a statewide force since the mid-1990s.

Gregory Rodriguez, a demographer and *Los Angeles Times* contributing editor, considers the Republican gaffes grave ones. But he thinks the shibboleth of Southern California political commentators—that it will "take a generation" for Republicans to recover the ground that Pete Wilson lost—is overstated. Bush, in fact, could be headed for about a third of the Latino vote in California. "He has a rapport," Rodriguez says. "He speaks to Latinos' strengths. The one great line of his convention speech was his notion about injecting conservative values into the fight for social justice." Traditionally conservative Mexican-American families might be receptive to that.

Delgadillo agrees that Bush's appeals to Latinos have caught the attention of California voters. "I've heard a lot of Latinos comment on it," he says. "Those things are resonating. I'm not sure that they'll make Latinos break a voter loyalty of many years."

Rodriguez believes that Bush's Latino support in Texas has been overstated. The campaign's touted claim that Bush got 49 percent of the Hispanic vote in his 1998 run is drawn from Voter News Service polls, which have an 11 percent margin of error. An even more serious problem, Rodriguez thinks, is that his rhetorical openness hasn't brought with it much in the way of new initiatives. "It really hasn't translated into policy in Texas," he says. "But that doesn't mean it won't translate into votes in California." ♦

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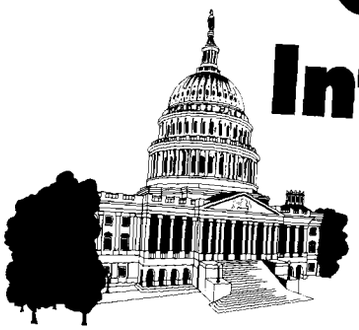

Concerning US Military Intervention in Colombia:

Remarks by Senator Slade Gorton, R-WA on June 21, 2000,

"Mr. President, the capacity of this body for self-delusion seems to this Senator to be unlimited . . .

"This bill includes almost $1 billion for an entirely new, and almost totally military, involvement in a civil war in Latin America, without the slightest promise that our intervention will be a success, and it does it in a totally backward fashion.

"The very committee report that recommends spending this almost $1 billion says that the committee 'has grave reservations regarding the administration's ability to effectively manage the use of these resources to achieve the expected results' . . .

"This bill says let's get in a war now and justify it later . . .

"It just seems impossible to me to believe that in the absence of the debate of the whole country, with all of the lessons we must have learned not just in this administration, but in previous administrations, about how easy it is to get in and how hard it is to get out, we will blithely make this downpayment — and this is a downpayment only . . .

"Next year, maybe we will need a lot more money if they are not doing very well down there. And how much of the equipment is going to end up in the hands of rebels by sale or capture or otherwise? We have no way of controlling that without a presence on the ground.

"I urge this body to say . . . we are not going to do this until you first come to us with a formal overall plan with a beginning, middle, and an end, and a plan for how we are going to achieve our goals. Get the authority first and then fund it. It is 10 times better for this society to put that $700 million on our debt and not get in a civil war in South America. That is what this debate is all about — not that we don't like the Colombians or that we don't want them to be successful, but we don't want a part of their war."

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Doris Meissner as Agamemnon

On the moral self-infatuation of Clinton's INS commissioner. BY ERIC FELTEN

AP / Wide World Photos

News Item: INS HONORS ELIÁN AGENTS
Brunswick, GA —The federal agent captured on film with goggles and gun as he ordered Donato Dalrymple to relinquish Elián González from a Little Havana closet . . . got a spirited, sustained applause for it on Tuesday. . . . The 100-plus agents of Operation Reunion took the stage at a federal law enforcers training academy here for a handshake and letter of commendation from U.S. Immigration Commissioner Doris Meissner. . . . "It was my firm conviction, then and now, that we did the right thing on April 22, and we are doing it again today," Meissner said in a prepared statement.

—*Miami Herald, Aug. 16*

WHY IS THIS SO GALLING? Why—even if one is in that muddled majority of Americans who agree little Elián had to be rescued at gunpoint from the home of his uncle—should one be appalled at this? After all, if you believe the commando raid was a necessity, shouldn't its successful completion be celebrated?

Actually, no. The deep corruption of the Clinton administration's entire approach to the Elián case was its insistence that it was doing not just what it felt it must, but something praiseworthy. In its confusion of doing what one must with doing the right thing, the INS's celebration last week, which was endorsed by Attorney General Janet Reno, is thus a grotesquely fitting postscript to the episode.

To get a sense of why, you can do worse than to look to those masters of moral complexity, the Greek tragedians. Consider Aeschylus' *Agamemnon*, which deals not just with how to choose in hard cases but, more important, with how to *behave* when faced with lousy choices.

The great general Agamemnon, you will recall, had embarked on a mission from the gods. No less a deity than Zeus himself commanded that Agamemnon lead a Greek armada against Troy to punish the city for stealing Helen, Athens' queen. But with his ships stranded in seas becalmed by the goddess Artemis, the general is presented by his soothsayer with an awful choice between two evils: Either he must sacrifice his innocent daughter Iphigenia to appease Artemis, or the soldiers under his command (and his daughter, too, for that matter) will die of thirst and starvation, a fate that also means the failure of his Zeus-ordered mission.

At first he seems to recognize the gravity of his dilemma: "A heavy doom is disobedience [to Zeus], but heavy, too, if I shall rend my own child, the adornment of my house, polluting a father's hands with streams of slaughtered maiden's blood close by the altar. Which of these is without evils?" No Hamlet he, Agamemnon chooses to kill Iphigenia. But from the moment he makes his decision, he conveniently forgets that he is acting under duress. Indeed, Agamemnon persuades himself that sacrificing his daughter is the *right thing* to do.

"Law is law!" he declares. "Let all go well." And so, convinced of the rightness of his action, Agamemnon becomes downright enthusiastic about doing in poor Iphigenia. "Gag her hard," he tells his henchmen. They tie her up (with the saffron robes that would have been her wedding gown) and throw her on the altar "like a goat."

The Chorus—that great organ voice of morality—is none too pleased.

But why? Didn't Agamemnon do what he had to do? Maybe so, but as Martha Nussbaum argues in her book *The Fragility of Goodness*, the Chorus is unhappy with the *attitude* Agamemnon has about the awful thing he has to do, and the fact that afterwards he never expresses regret. "When he had slipped his neck through the yoke-strap of necessity," the Chorus complains, "his thoughts blew in an impious, unholy direction." As Nussbaum explains, the Chorus expects an ethical person to "exhibit the feelings

Eric Felten is a senior editor at Reader's Digest.

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appropriate to a person of good character caught in such a situation. He will not regard the fact of decision as licensing feelings of self-congratulation, much less feelings of unqualified enthusiasm for the act chosen."

Self-congratulation, though, is the lodestar of the Clinton administration, and the INS's Doris Meissner its faithful servant. So we should probably not be surprised that, having first decided they had no choice but to grab Elián at gunpoint, they should now celebrate and congratulate themselves for having done the *right thing*. Never mind that in doing so they ignore the ugliness of the terrible scene they produced. They ignore the grim tableau of masked, machine-gun-toting commandos crashing into the suburban bungalow of American citizens (and seem to think that, as long as the gun didn't go off, it's perfectly okay to point an MP-5 at a six-year-old's chest). And they are apparently untroubled at having stomped and maced a television cameraman to keep him from capturing embarrassing footage of the raid. "Law is law!" the administration proclaims with self-righteous bluster.

Indeed, if the administration thinks it appropriate to celebrate its triumph over Elián's Miami relatives and the sputtering crowds of Little Havana, one has to wonder whether they ever understood themselves to be facing a moral dilemma in the first place. If—as it appears—they didn't appreciate that an awful choice had been thrust on them by outrageous fortune, how can they possibly imagine that they have done the right thing? Only because they share in the debased morality of the self-infatuated: They believe whatever they do is right because they do it.

What is the appropriate response from a public that witnesses its government's odious self-congratulation? There is nothing for us to do but, like the Chorus, avert our eyes from the shameful scene and mourn: "Justice turns the balance scales, sees that we suffer, and we suffer and we learn." ♦

Pardon Me, Mr. President

In the realm of criminal justice, Clinton gets a free pass from the media. BY DEBRA J. SAUNDERS

THE ELITE MEDIA BELIEVE that the much-used Texas death penalty may hurt governor George W. Bush in his bid for the White House. They paint the Texas criminal justice system as draconian, cavalier when it comes to due process, unfair to minorities, and excessively swift and unyielding. They take care to report that Bush has stopped only one execution out of 139. Yet while commentators gasp at tough Texas justice, the national media have had almost nothing to say about the Clinton record.

It is one that should horrify the "Save Gary Graham" crowd. To date, President Clinton has commuted the sentences of only 21 prisoners. Of the 21, 12 were convicted terrorists, former members of the Puerto Rican FALN who were serving time for such crimes as armed robbery, sedition, and interstate transportation of firearms with the intent to commit a crime. In 1999 when Clinton pardoned the FALN members, he wrote that he did so not for any partisan reason (read: Hillary's New York Senate race), but because "the prisoners were serving extremely lengthy sentences—in some cases 90 years—which were out of proportion for their crimes."

At the time, Clinton had commuted the sentences of only three other convicts. One was a pig farmer convicted of committing perjury in his bankruptcy trial. The other two were drug offenders whose prosecutors had sought reduced sentences in return for their cooperation. *National Journal* legal writer Stuart Taylor opined in October 1999, "The problem is not that Clinton has been too generous in showing mercy. It is that (putting aside the Puerto Rican nationalists) he has been too stingy—stingier than any other president in the past century, perhaps history."

(Vice President Al Gore, by the way, has refused to tell the media what he thought of the FALN pardons. After much waffling on the issue, he told the *New York Times*, "I have not reviewed the records, and here's why: This is a power given to the president, without any checks or balances. It's not reviewable by anyone." A good reason why the media should ask Gore what his pardon policy would be if he were elected.)

Since springing the FALN inmates, Clinton has freed another six convicts, five of them on July 7, 2000. The best-known of these was Amy Pofahl, who had served 9 years of a 24-year sentence for conspiracy. In fact, Pofahl was the estranged wife of Ecstasy kingpin Charles Pofahl. When he was arrested in Germany in 1989, Amy made the big mistake of gathering up his ill-gotten gains to help him post bail. Later, Charles cooperated with the feds and arranged a plea bargain; he pleaded guilty to tax evasion and was credited for some four years served behind German bars for breaking German drug laws. Charles served no time in U.S. federal prison. Amy, however, would not cooperate, and prosecutors charged her as part of her husband's vast drug operation. Asked what she thought her punish-

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ment should have been, Pofahl told the *San Francisco Chronicle*, "I think he should have got my sentence and I should have got his."

Pofahl's release last month was bittersweet, because, she said, "I leave so many people behind who are in the same situation." Asked how many Amy Pofahls there are, Families Against Mandatory Minimums founder Julie Stewart answered, "We could probably lay our hands on 200 quickly." The organization's spokesperson Monica Pratt asserts, "There are thousands of women serving mandatory sentences for drug conspiracy cases who are minimally or not at all involved with the drug offense they are being held accountable for."

The White House framed the five July 7 commutations as a merciful response to women who had "received much more severe sentences than their husbands and boyfriends." As spokesman Jake Siewert told the Associated Press, "The president felt they had served a disproportionate amount of time."

Not quite. One of the freed inmates was a male drug smuggler, Alain Orozco, who had cooperated in the prosecution of a bigger fish. Another, Louise House, was a leading heroin dealer in St. Louis who had frequently received drug deliveries from a young teenage girl. According to the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, House was arrested with $1.5 million worth of heroin on her, and the U.S. attorney described hers as "one of the most significant heroin cases this city has ever seen." House didn't serve a heavier sentence than her man; she was a widow.

Serena Nunn and Shawndra Mills came closer to the Pofahl profile. But the question remains why Clinton granted House clemency, and why his press office misrepresented the reason for her and Orozco's release. After I called the White House for more information, Siewert left a voicemail: "It's essentially, these came to our attention. These are the ones that got to the president's desk."

The July commutations, notes Monica Pratt, were "an admission [by the White House] that there's a problem here." When George W. Bush admits a problem—when he allowed for DNA testing in the Ricky McGinn case, for example (testing that would confirm McGinn's guilt)—his critics respond by demanding still more leniency. When this administration admits a problem, the media become mute and barely notice that the White House is letting major dealers loose while women like Kemba Smith—sentenced to 24 years after her drug kingpin boyfriend died—languish behind bars. There has been no loud call for this administration to reexamine drug policies that too often defy fairness.

Eric Sterling of the Criminal Justice Policy Foundation in Washington noted, "There is a national movement to encourage Clinton to free hundreds, if not thousands, of people like Pofahl. It's called Jubilee Justice 2000." Yet Jubilee Justice 2000 is garnering a tiny fraction of the coverage bestowed on those who wanted Governor Bush to commute the sentence of convicted killer Gary Graham. Then again, talking about federal prosecutorial overkill won't help keep a Democrat in the White House. ♦

To Kill a Mockingbird

Make sure you have a federal permit—and watch out for reporters. BY WOODY WEST

AN INTERSECTION of cultural vectors occurs from time to time that is magnificent in its absurdity, a confluence that exhaustively defines how goofy an advanced society can be when it earnestly sets its mind to it. If this were an aberrant case of what Hamlet called the world "disjoint and out of frame," why all hands could gulp and carry on. But there is something disturbingly, ah, normative about this episode.

The elements are (of course) the federal government, journalism in witless mode, and a public sensibility of such softness that it is not far from emotional rot. Specifically: (1) the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service; (2) the *Washington Post*; and (3) that excessive public sensibility, alarmingly pervasive, that shudders when a flea or a frog is summarily dispatched.

Woody West is associate editor of the Washington Times.

The riveting episode began with a three-column story on one of the *Post*'s local pages recently. Seems that a mockingbird (presumably a female, but one hesitates to attach a sexual label these days) was "dive-bombing" federal workers at a building in downtown Washington. It is unclear who called for an anti-bird special-ops team (the building houses hundreds of State Department workers, the paper reported, and it would be invidious to speculate whether a member of that department was driven to desperation so easily). Shortly, though, workers from the District of Columbia animal control agency responded. It is a trait of the territorial mockingbird, the newspaper explained, quoting an expert source, to attack any passerby near its nest. So the workers removed three hatchlings from the nearby tree where the mockingbird's nest reposed and, as the reporter delicately phrased it, they "were put to sleep."

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Illustration by Darren Gygi

Well, fine, a cute trifle, of the kind that scruffy newspapermen of an older day would have characterized as, at best, a "barking dog saves family of four" story.

It was odd, though, to see it reported under a multi-column headline and at greater length than the average D.C. homicide is recounted these days.

But it was enough to make the sushi hit the fan. Two days later, this time under a bold four-column headline, the *Post* informed its readers that the animal-control workers who zapped the hatchlings "are now subjects of a federal investigation."

How did the feds get into it? one might wonder, and wonder as well whether the crack enforcers of wildlife protection didn't have bigger fish to fry, so to say. A "spokeswoman for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service said [the D.C. workers'] actions clearly violated the Migratory Bird Act Treaty of 1918, a federal statute designed to protect wild birds by making it illegal to seize a bird, hatchlings, eggs or nest without a federal permit." Maximum penalties under the statute, the *Post* somberly reported, include fines up to $100,000 for individuals and $200,000 for organizations, and a year in the Big House.

D.C. animal control, it turned out, did not have a permit to remove and later "euthanize" the hatchlings. The *Post* went into Woodward mode in following the trail of the crime. The "chief of animal disease control for the D.C. Department of Health . . . declined to discuss the matter." Neither would another "spokeswoman" for the department itself, "saying the incident is under review and officials will not comment until the review is completed next week."

All of this awfulness could have been avoided, it seems, if the animal control workers had taken the three mockingbird hatchlings to a local rehabilitation center—federally licensed centers which care "for injured or orphaned wildlife and gradually reintroduce them to their natural environments." The three tiny mockingbirds were killed because it was too late in the day to send them to federal rehab—or so the city flack-catcher averred.

Not so, responded a woman from the Wildlife Rescue League, which transports orphans and other of nature's detritus to the federal rehabilitation centers. There were bird-and-bunny volunteers available, and she contended her organization was not called after the hatchlings were hijacked.

For any reactionary who might snicker at this piffling skein of action and regulatory reaction, she added, "[T]here's nothing funny about babies being killed."

"Babies!"—three apprentice mockingbirds! Dear, dear. These weren't osprey chicks or bald eagle nestlings. Has anyone heard that mockingbirds are on the endangered species list? And, anyhow, two of the three might have become cat snacks long before they arrived at a level of development to dive-bomb State Department helots.

It is admittedly a day now pretty much gone when "animal control" consisted of putting the latest litter of pups or kittens in a gunny sack and dropping them off the nearest bridge. And a good thing, too, no doubt.

Might there, however, be a teensy disproportion involved in this mockingbird affair—a six-figure fine, a year in the slammer, a major agency of the mightiest government on the globe invoking a 1918 treaty clause? And an intra-departmental "review" convened, consuming how many hours of meetings and how many pages of findings?

And all the while, the government officials responsible for sorting out this crime against nature are twitching, knowing the *Post* is out there . . . waiting and watching. ♦

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Homeschool U.

Patrick Henry College will offer higher education aimed at the homeschooled. BY SARAH A. MASERATI

WITH WELL OVER a million American children homeschooled, and the number growing steadily year after year, homeschool advocates are turning their attention to higher education. Some have banded together to found Patrick Henry College, an evangelical Christian school due to open its doors at a brand new campus in Purcellville, Virginia, this October.

The almost 80 students in the first entering class, most of them products of homeschooling, are currently getting acquainted through Internet chat groups. They are about to embark on studies designed to ground them in the history and philosophy of the West and to prepare them for the real world of government through a unique "apprenticeship" link to Capitol Hill. The new college's motto: "For Christ and for Liberty."

Patrick Henry College is largely the brainchild of its president and chief fund-raiser, attorney Michael Farris, a leader of the homeschooling movement since the 1980s. As founder and president of the Home School Legal Defense Association, he spearheaded the successful effort to make homeschooling legal in all 50 states. He also hosts a daily radio show for homeschoolers, serves as interim pastor of a church, and is chairman of the Madison Project, a political action committee. And Farris practices what he preaches: His own ten children are homeschooled.

The idea for the college, Farris explains, grew out of his lobbying work with members of Congress. "We got a lot of calls from Capitol Hill asking for sharp homeschooled kids to fill staff positions." For their part, Farris and his fellow advocates were frustrated by their interactions with liberal staffers who were unsympathetic to their causes. "What [legislators and staffers] were looking for and what we needed were kids with strong academic backgrounds and a solid conservative political philosophy. We hope to train our students to have just that."

And they intend to put their students to work. In the apprenticeship program at Patrick Henry, juniors and seniors—all of whom, initially, will be majoring in government—will write position papers requested by members of Congress and others in local, state, and federal office. The students will function, in effect, as off-site interns, telecommuting from Purcellville. The aim, Farris says, is "to help produce a professional career path that will make a difference and have an impact on our country."

The college has succeeded in attracting superior students. The entering class—almost 80 students—has average SAT scores of 1207.

To prepare students, a rigorous academic program is planned with little room for electives. In their first two years, students will follow a core curriculum including history, rhetoric, the Old and New Testaments, biblical reasoning, and computer science. Juniors and seniors will take comparative politics, international relations, state and local government, and public budgeting and finance. The emphasis on writing will be Patrick Henry's hallmark: Students will write 27 research papers in two years. Once the second major, classical liberal arts, receives state certification, students in that program will take three semesters of ancient Greek and write a novel.

The college will begin with a full-time faculty of nine, all of whom will have earned Ph.D.s by the spring of 2001. And it has succeeded in attracting superior students: Their average SAT score is 1207, well above the national average. It helps that Patrick Henry, launched with contributions from the Home School Legal Defense Association and private donors, will cost students only $15,000 a year, including room and board—about half the cost of other private colleges.

Critics charge that so small and single-minded an institution can't foster intellectual breadth, but Farris affirms his commitment to creating a vigorous exchange of ideas. Students will attend weekly town hall meetings, where they will be exposed to a wide range of speakers and debate the issues of the day. At the same time, in keeping with its mission to produce "virtuous leaders," the school will require daily attendance at chapel. And in an attempt to avoid the typical college dating scene, which Farris calls "morally bankrupt," Patrick Henry will institute a strict policy: Students who are interested in each other must notify their parents and adhere to their parents' rules of courtship.

Another line of criticism is one to which homeschoolers have become accustomed: that Patrick Henry students will be shy and antisocial because of the sheltered atmosphere of the college. In fact, homeschooled students tend to have had widely varied experiences; those who apply to Patrick Henry College are required to write an essay about their community activities. "We have all been really involved in our communities," says incoming student Brian von Duyke. "We are aware of global issues. I haven't met one person here whom I'd describe as an isolationist. This is a free environment. I get more and more excited every day about how positive this thing can be." ♦

Sarah A. Maserati is an intern at THE WEEKLY STANDARD.

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The Hollywood Democrats

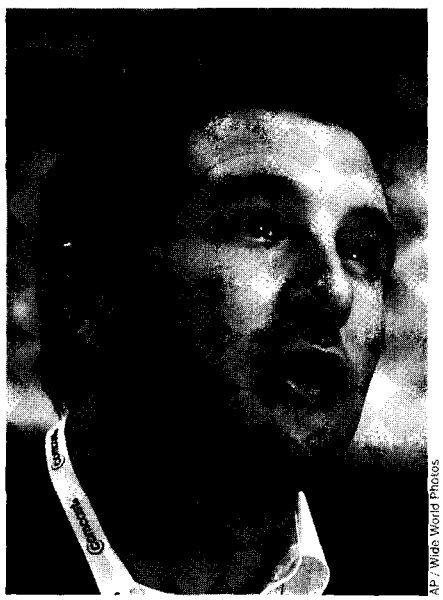
Billy Baldwin is leader of the pack.

By Matt Labash

Los Angeles

Of all the good things to be, there is nothing so good as a Baldwin brother. And of all the Baldwin brothers to be, there is none so good as William. The Baldwins are to acting what the Kennedys are to politics, the Wallendas to the flying trapeze. But for anyone who has ever wanted to be a Baldwin brother (and which of us hasn't?), William is the obvious choice: cooler than Stephen, cleaner than the occasionally drug-addicted Daniel, less water-retentive than Alec.

My faith in this *über*-Baldwin, if you will, is reinforced when I meet him in his role as president of the Creative Coalition, the celebrity-riddled, arts-related political advocacy organization. The Coalition is sponsoring a panel discussion at the cavernous Los Angeles Public Library, and when I first encounter Baldwin, I'm uncertain how to address him. A Coalition spokeswoman says he often goes by William, but his friends call him Billy. I suggest maybe we start with William, then as we become friends over the course of the day, we can switch to Billy. Says Baldwin, "We'll see how it goes."



AP / Wide World Photos

Billy Baldwin

Billy, as I now call him (our rapport is immediate), has no time for niceties. He must take a break from noshing (Creative Coalitionists don't eat, they nosh) to troubleshoot a scheduling conflict. It seems that paralyzed actor/panelist Christopher Reeve is sequestered in a side room with an MSNBC interlocutor, and the panel is scheduled to begin.

Matt Labash is a staff writer at The Weekly Standard.

Billy approaches two library security guards standing sentinel in front of the room; they've been ordered to admit no one. He asks to be let in, without success. He looks at me, stumped, and I ask him if they know who he is. "Yeah, they don't care," he says, "which is kind of refreshing." As one who's not a Baldwin brother, I don't find it nearly as refreshing, so I ask the guards if they have ever seen Billy's career-making vehicle, *Backdraft*. "No," says one, "but I have been on the ride at the Universal theme park." I ask the gentleman who his favorite Baldwin is. "All of them," he says sheepishly. "That's such a p.c. answer," says Billy, playfully punching the guard in the shoulder (Stephen is generally considered the playful Baldwin, but all Baldwins are good-humored). Not satisfied, I ask the man which Baldwin is his wife's favorite. "James," he mistakenly replies. Billy is not related to the black writer, but is a fan of his work.

The guards can resist the Baldwin charm no longer, and relent. Reeve is released, and the panel gets underway. Inside the auditorium, Crystal Geyser water bottles sit next to ergonomically correct panelists' chairs. The crowd is well-heeled: Many of the gentlemen sport monochrome shirt/tie combos, which they were wearing well before Regis Philbin popularized the look among proletarian *arrivistes*. The women all have tasteful highlights, strappy sandals, and firm haunches. This is not the crowd you would see attending a roundtable on electricity deregulation at the Brookings Institution.

The panel is moderated by Christopher Cuomo (son of Mario, brother of Andrew), a television talking-head and, more important, an alum of *People* magazine's 50 Most Beautiful People list. Cuomo is not content simply to moderate, but rather is in constant motion, performing

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talk-show-host calisthenics: the running-start down the aisle, the punctuated armfold, the sitting-to-standing half-gainer, etc. The discussion, which features low-grade celebrities like Hector Elizondo, as well as sugar-free party hacks like secretary of education Richard Riley, concerns arts education and public financing. The panelists talk about the arts, and say something about public financing. But one notices a certain distractedness, especially among the female contingent in the room. Many Baldwinologists insist Billy is the handsome Baldwin, and today he is suited up in slimming three-button black with a cobalt tie, which plays off his jet-black mane complete with factory-issued forelock. During the discussion, Baldwin bounces all over the room with an athlete's lope, shushing cell phones, having sotto voce conversations, generally serving as the object of the female gaze.

When he joins in the Q&A, one can almost feel the mangier male journalists hoping he'll prove a himbo. He's not. Many celebrity activists have demonstrated themselves idiots (think Marlon Brando on Sacheen Little Feather, Cybill Shepherd on anything). But Baldwin exhibits a command of the issue. He deplores reducing the debate on arts funding to horror stories about "kiddie porn and *Piss Christ*." He correctly deploys four-syllable words. After the panel, he is surrounded by issue-talking admirers, a mosh pit of batting lashes and over-familiar arm touches. But he has little time to make new friends. The Creative Coalition is off to the Democratic Convention.

Ken Kesey once said that you are either on the bus or off it. Today I am on the bus with a Baldwin brother, along with celebrities like beret-wearing actor Joe Pantoliano (nicknamed "Joey Pants") and Tom Arnold, the perpetually antsy former husband of Roseanne, who alternates between smoking Cohibas and chewing gum as if he is trying to break it. Billy himself seems exuberant, as he bums cigarettes and relishes the musicality of Italian swear words, which he lets fly with abandon. Perhaps he is happy to be going to the convention. Perhaps he is just happy to be a Baldwin brother.

A Coalition staffer presents us with a knotty dilemma of the kind these bus denizens must encounter every day: What kind of chilled designer coffee do we want? Baldwin takes center stage in the aisle, eyeing his troops like a proud father. "I'm just glad the Creative Coalition can finally afford Starbucks' iced cappuccinos," he jokes, as if he helmed some down-at-the-heels 501 (c)(3). In the back of the bus, the underdressed Arnold teases Baldwin. "You look nice," Arnold says, "Got a wedding later?" We sip our Frappuccinos. We talk a little shop (Joey says you know your career is in trouble when the movie set informs you, "We want the clothes back"). We laugh a hearty laugh when Tom Arnold mentions that the Creative Coalition is ostensibly nonpartisan. "That's a bunch of bulls—," he chortles, as there don't seem to be any Republicans in sight.

The bus wheels into the convention parking lot at the Staples Center, and a blonde LAPD officer boards to check all our laminated "honored guest" passes. We hold up our lammies, but Baldwin has some difficulty wriggling his out of his coat. The female officer is willing to give the celebrities the benefit of the doubt and starts to deboard before she can see the credentials. "Hey," Baldwin shouts, "you didn't check mine."

"You want me to come back there?" she says flirtatiously, no longer a member of the country's fiercest police force, but suddenly a woman. She eyes Billy's pass. "I better hold my gun," she jokes, "this one doesn't look any good." The whole scene is starting to play like the beginning of a bad movie, but it's innocent enough (Baldwin is married to Chynna Phillips, co-founder of early '90s supergroup Wilson Phillips, and he whips out pictures of his wife and baby daughter at the slightest provocation).

"Now which brother are you?" the officer asks. "James Baldwin," several people yell out. The officer doesn't seem to know her Baldwins or to be a big reader. "He wrote *Black Like Me*," says Joey Pants.

The simple act of entering a Democratic convention is a wholly unique experience when you're riding with a Baldwin. As we stand in line, I brace for the invasive, laborious security search of my bag, but an escort instructs us to come with her, and we bypass the metal detector. (It is discomfiting to know that had I been an assassin, our country's future could have been forever altered because I came in with Cindy Crawford's co-star from *Fair Game*.) But there are harder things than acclimating yourself to the royal treatment. As we file to our seats somewhere above the Guam delegation ("You notice the Texas delegation is sitting in the parking lot," cracks Joey Pants), I talk shoes with Max Keiser, who heads an Internet company called the Hollywood Stock Exchange. "They're Prada," he says, pointing down to a pair of silver kicks that look like they're covered in aluminum foil. "I've got thirty pairs of them." When I ask him why on earth he'd own one pair of them, let alone thirty, he says, "Silver represents the quicksilver new economy. It's part of the Revolution. Want my take on the violence-in-the-media debate?"

I don't, actually. I'd rather head to the buffet and open bar in the VIP lounge with Billy Baldwin. The place resembles a celebrity ant farm under the gaze of the sky

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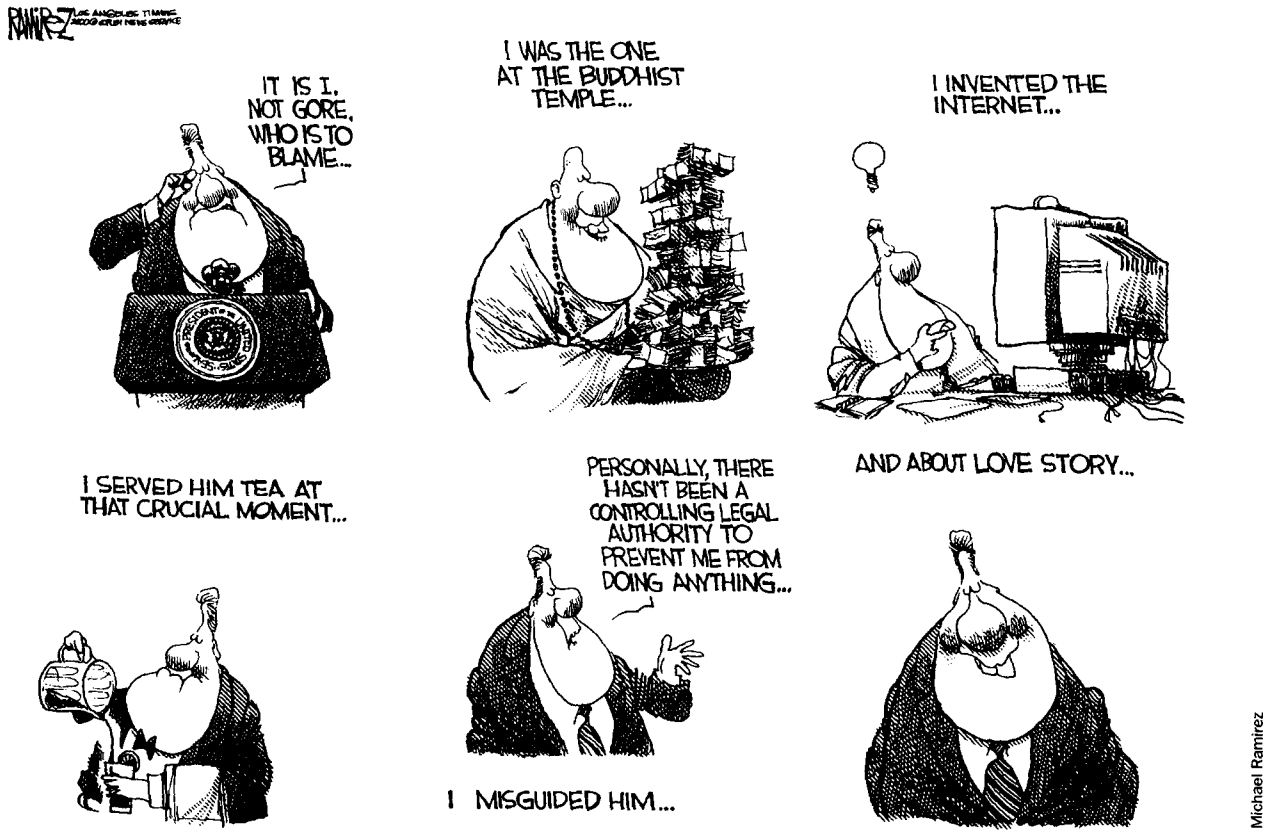
suite balconies. There's former *Seinfeld* starlet Julia Louis-Dreyfus eating (or rather, noshing) blue-corn tortilla chips. Here's actor Chris Lawford (son of Peter) confirming my suspicions about what it was like to make out with his *All My Children* co-star Susan Lucci: "It was great," he says, beaming. There's Joey Pants reclining on a couch, spitting blood about the Screen Actors Guild labor dispute. "F— the whales, save the actors," he says.

Many celebrities go about their business unmolested, but the main attraction at the celebrity zoo is the exhibit called The Billy Baldwin. As he walks the convention halls, Billy passes about as fast as a kidney stone. A college girl spills her Miller Lite in anticipation of an encounter. "He's dreamy," she says. Baldwin bums a cigarette off a guy talking on a cell phone, who hands the phone to Baldwin and makes him rub it in to his disbelieving ex-girlfriend. Everywhere Billy goes, he is mobbed and tugged, and he's darn near killed in the media stack-up as the Warren Beatty entourage crosses paths with the Baldwin party (there are no journalistic fatalities, and we all live to suck up to more celebrities).

So impeded is our progress that Billy and I resign ourselves to conducting our interview while being jostled around the hall. Now seems as good a time as any to ask Billy to provide a taxonomy of the Baldwin brothers. So I ask him to break it down using boy-band archetypes (The Funny One, The Brooder, etc). Billy rejects the premise. He sees his family through the prism of the Spice Girls, and chooses his definitions thus: His oldest brother, Alec, is "Smart Spice," while rowdy Stephen is "Boy Toy Spice." I ask him about Daniel, renowned for his bouts with drugs. A pained expression crosses Billy's face: "Double Trouble Spice," he says.

Down on the concourse, during one of Baldwin's on-the-fly television interviews, a middle-aged second cousin of the Gore family, afraid to interrupt, has a photo snapped of her face side by side with the back of Baldwin's head. It's a wonder Billy has time to see the speeches, but he makes a point of getting back for Ted Kennedy's (the Baldwins are Kennedy Democrats—and, in the Kennedy manner, fairly interchangeable: Several fans can't believe their good fortune in running into Alec).

Like Alec, Billy is a student of politics. He proves this not just by sitting through Kennedy's speech, but by enduring, with no apparent loss of consciousness, Bill Bradley's campaign retread. When the evening finally concludes, Billy tells me to stay put. He has to run upstairs to see Al Gore's daughter Karenna. "She's a friend," he explains, though there's no need to. When you're a Baldwin, everybody is. ♦



Michael Ramirez

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Software for Tyrants

Harvard proudly markets PolicyMaker 2.2 as a program that will help politicians get what they want.

By Neil Seeman

PolicyMaker 2.2™ is a jazzy new computer program devised by Harvard University professor Michael Reich. Selling for just under $100, this Nintendo-style spreadsheet—which bills itself as the latest in "computer-assisted political analysis" (CAPA)—has entered the curriculum at schools of public policy around the world. It's used in the World Bank's flagship health care course for diplomats, "Health Sector Reform and Sustainable Financing," and in training programs at the Inter-American Development Bank. Just as computer-aided design assists architects to sketch buildings, PolicyMaker helps civil servants design public policy.

PolicyMaker's gimmick—what the Harvard marketers call its "algorithm"—is devilishly simple. You just punch in your preferred policy outcome, a laundry list of affected "players," and a potpourri of potential "obstacles," and seconds later your PC disgorges page upon page of brightly colored "feasibility graphs" showing the pros and cons of dozens of diverging, pre-programmed political strategies for achieving your goal.

Since the debut of the prototype two years ago (version 2.2 just hit the stands), PolicyMaker's influence on international policy-making has been dizzying. It has been used to set local health priorities in Tanzania, to analyze government tobacco policy in Vietnam, to assess national pharmaceutical policies in nine African nations, and to impose major health sector reform in Zambia, Mexico, and the Dominican Republic. Professor Reich has even heard a rumor that Zambia's corruption-riddled government is using the program for "political election purposes."

Professor Reich, who teaches international health policy, concedes that PolicyMaker, and computer-assisted political analysis in general, carry certain risks. "PolicyMaker is designed to help policy makers get what they want, which is not necessarily good from an ethical or a technical perspective," Reich says in a statement that accompanies the program. Coming up with something you can sell to the public "should not substitute for assuring the ethical and technical bases of a policy." And, of course, even totalitarian regimes can benefit from the software. As Reich puts it, "It can be adapted to situations with different distributions of power."

PolicyMaker is just the tip of the iceberg when it comes to the brave new world of techno-politics. Step inside any school of public policy today and you will find that policy-making is the province of automatons. Focus groups, online polls, computer programs galore—public policy education boils down to *process*.

New software like PolicyMaker is helping drive the revolution. Microsoft Project, for example, is a popular generic policy planning tool. There are programs for "stakeholder analysis" and "political mapping" and infrastructure design. The United Nations Development Program has its own software; and Private Agencies Collaborating Together (PACT) has developed, with USAID funding, an "analytic capacity assessment tool" for non-governmental organizations called DOSA (Discussion-Oriented Self-Assessment).

All these initiatives pale in comparison with what lies ahead. Already under development is software that allows users to assess the prospects for generating political will—out of thin air!—for a virtually limitless range of domestic policy reforms. Experts in the field of artificial intelligence (AI) anticipate a new generation of computers that will

Neil Seeman writes editorials and essays for the National Post, *a Canadian daily.*

Illustration by Patrick Arrasmith

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soon be able to act as autonomous agents, to assess the political environment and even think using emotions and instinct. Prototypes have already been made that purport to resolve disputes in bioethics and other fields, grade academic essays, and manage prison sentencing. These new tools are worlds apart from the high-speed calculators of yore; for they are programmed to make inherently political value judgments—to prefer, say, contracting out over busting unions. What's more, these new systems, if and when they fail, cannot be taken to task in public hearings or congressional inquiries.

All of which signals a major step beyond the last generation of artificial intelligence, in which computers merely provided conclusions, albeit powerful ones, based on the information human beings fed them. Examples of these earlier information-processing tools include medical systems such as MYCIN, which tabulates information about patients' cases (e.g. history, symptoms, laboratory test results) to help physicians formulate hypotheses and nurse managers control costs; military systems such as the Integrated Defense Systems (IDS), to determine optimal response times and simulate enemy counter-measures; criminal law enforcement software such as Brainmaker, used to identify police officers who display behavior that could lead to crime or corruption; and psychiatric tools such as the somewhat scary-sounding Good Mood Program, which enables users to talk through their personal difficulties.

For those who believe that efficient delivery of public services is the most important goal of public administration, these twenty-first-century tools have clear advantages. First, they remove inconvenient levels of discretion from the policy-making process. That might appeal to liberal political theorists such as Theodore Lowi (*The End of Liberalism*, 1969) who have argued passionately that the American system delegates too much discretionary authority to administrative agencies, a recipe for patronage government and unaccountable bureaucracies. And liberal idealists who object to a world where decision-makers are guided primarily by self-interest doubtless welcome computer-assisted policy-making. Finally, those who see public administration as a branch of science must feel at home in the new world.

But to many, the rise of computerized policy-making is troublesome. It throws to the winds the Aristotelian directive to discover the common good through careful deliberation and honorable leadership. It undermines the civil servant's power to challenge elected officials—by raising questions, courting public approbation, or even taking some initiative to bring about a change of course (what political scientist Hugh Heclo has called "loyalty that argues back"). And, more generally, it erodes the role of public servants as individuals—as thinking people and ethical agents. For all its snazzy graphics, mechanized policy-making puts us on a dangerous path. ♦

Caveat Computator

For fun, I decided to take PolicyMaker for a test drive. I asked the program to tell me how to persuade Harvard University to hand over a small chunk of its mammoth $14 billion endowment to the poor communities in nearby Roxbury and South Boston. Miraculously, after I plugged in all the "players" I could think of and their corresponding "strategies," "opportunities," "interests," "coalitions," and "networks," I discovered that the "current feasibility" of my proposed policy was virtually guaranteed. The plan scored an impressive 130 points out of a possible 150, with the remaining 20 points scattered among "non-mobilized" and "opposed" alliances. A majority of the "sub-units" and "social groups" at Harvard, including the alumni association and the myriad faculty associations and student groups, would be positively disposed to the scheme, the program told me. Sure, there were a few holdouts at the business school, but their "power scores" were marginal. And once I plugged in the different groups' "humanitarian" and "ideological" interests, the plan's prospects jumped considerably. When it came to stretching out a helping hand to the poor, the "influence relationships" among the different players were decidedly "cooperative" as opposed to "conflictual," and I soon found myself moving swimmingly toward my goal.

I did, however, encounter a minor detour. After I printed out a series of colorful graphs and pie charts documenting the wisdom of my policy, an annoying sign popped up on my video screen. It read, "*Warning: Do not confuse your analysis with reality*." Uncertainties are inevitable in policymaking and politics, it advised. PolicyMaker, I learned, was designed only to help "improve the art of the feasible amidst the inevitable uncertainties. Caveat Computator." Duly noted.

—*Neil Seeman*

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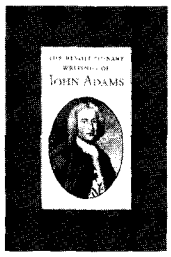

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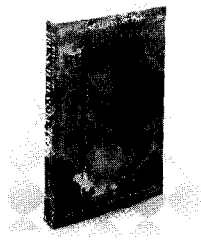

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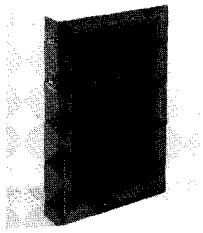

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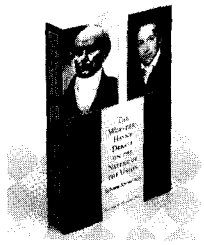

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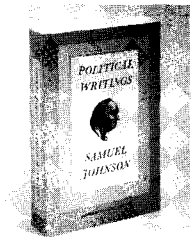

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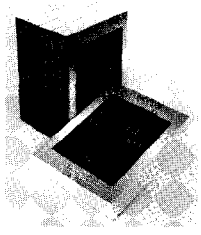

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Bowling with the Social Scientists

Robert Putnam surveys America

By James Davison Hunter

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The health of American democracy has been much disputed over the last decade—and for good reason. Our democratic arrangements date from the Enlightenment, when they were established by a relatively small and mostly homogeneous population with an agrarian and mercantile economy. These arrangements were inspired and sustained by a strong public culture informed by classical and biblical ideals. But the state itself was poorly organized, and it had limited power.

More than two hundred years later, our circumstances are profoundly different. The state is large, powerful, and bureaucratically abstruse, with few authentic connections to ordinary citizens. Technological advances and the globalization of markets have restructured the economy in ways that involve complex entanglements with government. The rather severe mainline Protestant consensus about manners and morals lasted for many years, but it has disintegrated into innumerable ethnic, racial, national, and religious particularities, often joined by little more than the thin fabric of therapeutic, consumer-oriented individualism. Cultural elites are now distinguished—indeed, almost defined—by their disaffection from what remains of the beliefs, values, social arrangements, and aspirations of Middle America. The public culture within which democratic institutions formulate their agenda has collapsed, turning political philosophy into slick marketing appeals and public policy into image-conscious popular theater.

Bowling Alone
The Collapse and Revival of American Community
by Robert Putnam
Simon & Schuster, 544 pp., $26

This is not simply a facile story of decline, though many (from the far right of the Southern agrarians to the far left of the contemporary environmentalists) have tried to picture it as such. It's absurd to imagine that we once possessed a bucolic Eden and foolishly traded it for the Babel of self-absorbed materialism. The point to consider is rather that American democratic institutions were designed to operate in a different world than that in which we live today. And while these institutions have evolved considerably, American democracy now faces problems that would have been unimaginable to its founders—problems, perhaps, that no mere evolution of our institutions will be able to address.

The glaring reality of this situation has led many authors over the last few years to examine America's democratic culture. To list just a few of the more significant works is to name *The Idea of Civil Society* by Adam Seligman, *Democracy in Dark Times* by Jeffrey Isaac, *The Revolt of the Elite and the Betrayal of Democracy* by Christopher Lasch, *Democracy on Trial* by Jean Bethke Elshtain, *False Dawn: The Delu-*

James Davison Hunter is Kenan professor of sociology at the University of Virginia. He is the author of The Death of Character: Moral Education in An Age Without Good or Evil, *recently issued by Basic Books.*

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sions of Global Capitalism by John Gray, *The End of Equality* by Mickey Kaus, *Why Americans Hate Politics* by E.J. Dionne, *Breaking the News: How the Media Undermine American Democracy* by James Fallows, and *Democracy's Discontent* by Michael Sandel.

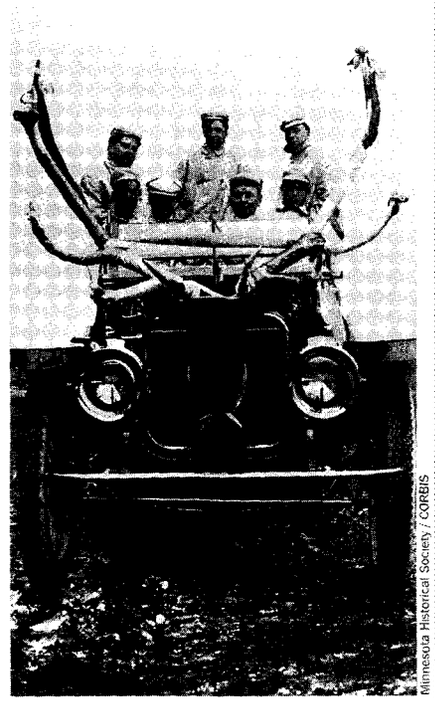
The debate among these authors begins with a question about the current health of American democracy. Beneath that debate, however, lurks the question of the future: We don't know how an Enlightenment-era institution will survive in a post-Enlightenment public culture and social order, and if it does, whether it will embody our received notions of justice, representation, community, and the public good. It is a question that has become more interesting with the recent contributions of Robert Putnam.

Academics generally don't write books for the fun of it. The private dream of many scholars is that the book they write will be among the most important books ever written on a particular subject and that it will have an influential role in changing the thinking of their audience.

Needless to say, most academics are disappointed, but for Robert Putnam, a political scientist from Harvard, dream became reality with an article he wrote for the *Journal of Democracy* in 1995 entitled, "Bowling Alone: America's Declining Social Capital." In this short piece, Putnam argued that the high levels of social capital—the networks of civic engagement and involvement—that America once had in abundance are now in sharp decline. The example he chose for his title seemed particularly telling: People go bowling as much today as they ever did, but bowling in organized leagues plummeted as much as 40 percent between 1980 and 1993.

Needless to say, Putnam looked far beyond bowling leagues to voter turnout, attendance at town meetings, and membership in labor unions, PTAs, and such civic and fraternal organizations as the Lions, the Elks, the Shriners, the Jaycees, and the League of Women Voters. He examined rates of volunteering in mainline civic organizations such as the Boy Scouts and the Red Cross, and he tallied attendance at religious services. Through it all, he found significant decline.

He found some interesting countertrends within the environmental movement, feminism, organizations for the elderly, as well as voluntary associations and small groups oriented toward self-help, hobbies, and book discussions. Yet, he argued, none of these offer the kind of thick and binding associations that traditional social and civic organizations provided. At the end, he concluded, social capital in the form of civic associations has significantly eroded over the last generation—which has serious consequences: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The Minneapolis Elks Club, c. 1915.

> Life is easier in a community blessed with a substantial stock of social capital. In the first place, networks of civic engagement foster sturdy norms of generalized reciprocity and encourage the emergence of social trust. Such networks facilitate coordination and communication, amplify reputations, and thus allow dilemmas to collective action to be resolved. When economic and political negotiation is embedded in dense networks of social interaction, incentives for opportunism are reduced. At the same time, networks of civic engagement embody past success at collaboration, which can serve as a cultural template for future collaboration. Finally, dense networks of interaction probably broaden the participants' sense of self, developing the "I" into the "we."

As these things go, Putnam enjoyed a fantastic run. Prominent columnists picked up the ideas in his essay, and he was soon besieged by reporters from all over the country, profiled by *People* magazine, and invited to the White House. The article turned him into an intellectual celebrity with an agent and a contract from a mainstream publisher to write a book on the subject.

His colleagues in the social sciences, however, were less sure of his thesis. The *American Behavioral Scientist* and the *American Prospect* devoted entire issues to an assessment of his argument, the American Association of Retired Persons sponsored a survey on civic involvement, as did the Pew Center for the People and the Press, and Everett Carll Ladd performed a book-length dissection in 1999. They all challenged his definition of social capital and social trust and his analysis of key data. Putnam, they argued, conflated the norms, networks, and consequences of social capital, ignored other sources of voluntary association and civic engagement, and underestimated the role of economic and governmental organizations in generating social trust. In the midst of this, his colleague, John Helliwell, discovered that the General Social Survey Putnam had relied upon had systematically undercounted the average number of memberships to which Americans belonged. Not everyone was unkind, but the reaction was still emphatic. As Ladd concluded, "Contemporary America hasn't dissipated the country's historic reserve of social capital."

Robert Putnam did not stumble accidentally into his controversial thesis. It was, rather, an extension of an earlier book he had written on democratic experience in Italy. *Making Democracy Work: Civic Traditions in Modern Italy*, published in 1993, was a first-rate work of political science that explored the historical and institutional reasons strong democratic politics

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developed in the north of Italy and failed to do so in the south. The narrative focused on the contrasting social and political circumstances that led in Northern Italy to the evolution of a vigorous and independent civil society—voluntary institutions that fostered trust, public cooperation, good citizenship, and self-government. These were largely absent in southern Italy.

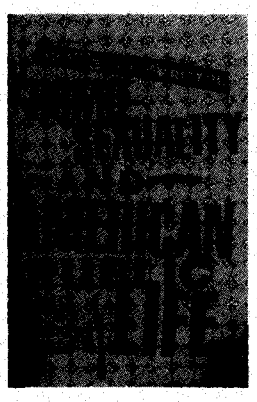
The parallels between *Making Democracy Work* and Alexis de Tocqueville's *Democracy in America* are not accidental. In the 1830s, Tocqueville toured America in search of the reasons the American democratic experiment enjoyed such vitality while France did not. And his answer turns on the fact that America had not inherited a centralized and bureaucratic government; indeed, reproducing one in the thinly populated new world would have been impossible. As a consequence, Americans engaged in collective action and built their nation through local voluntary associations.

Whenever there was a need, Americans organized themselves within voluntary alliances and affiliations to address it. As Tocqueville put it, "Americans of all ages, all stations in life, and all types of disposition are forever forming associations." In short, American democracy developed a strong civil society: robust institutions and associations mediating the private interests of individuals and families with collective interests, not least those of a democratic government.

This is the intellectual context for Putnam's 1995 essay and the new book, *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community*, which has at last followed it. *Bowling Alone* does not stray from the central arguments laid out in 1995. In the main, Putnam refines and elaborates on these arguments with extraordinary detail, responding to many (though not all) of the criticisms his article received. In eight chapters, he lays out with considerable precision and far more subtlety than he has yet been given credit for, the trends in civic engagement and social capital in all aspects of life. His conclusions are hard to miss:

- In politics, "we remain . . . reasonably well-informed spectators of public affairs, but many fewer of us actually partake in the game";
- In civic life, "active involvement in face-to-face organizations has plummeted," and "only mailing list membership has continued to expand, with the creation of an entirely new species of 'tertiary' association whose members never actually meet";

Think about it.



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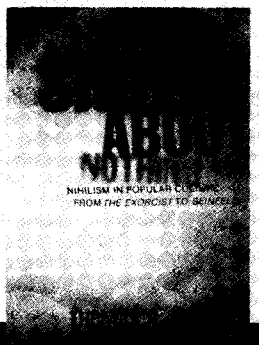

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A New England sewing circle in 1900.

• In religious life, "Americans are going to church less often than we did three or four decades ago, and the churches we go to are less engaged with the wider community";

• In the workplace, "Americans at the beginning of the twenty-first century are demonstrably less likely than our parents were to join with our co-workers in formal association," while "we have witnessed a striking diminution of regular contacts with our friends and neighbors";

• In volunteerism, there have been some rises, but they tend to be concentrated among the baby-boomers' aging parents. Where alternative networks of association are emerging, they tend to be "one-shot, special purpose, and self-oriented."

The strength of Putnam's book is not its theoretical or conceptual novelty but its accumulation and sifting of data. As Richard Morin put it in the *Washington Post*, reading *Bowling Alone* is "like sipping sociology from a fire hose." In this, Putnam has at least earned the right to make the strong claims he makes about the decline of social capital in America and its specific effects in the realm of education, child welfare, the quality of neighborhoods, health and well-being, and economic prosperity.

But the question of what it all means still remains. Robert Putnam's achievement in 1995 was to generate not a public consensus but a public debate on one aspect of the larger and more complex quandary of how democracy survives. His expansion into a book has done little to quell the objections of his critics, who tend to argue that Putnam has it wrong. Rather than indicating a decline of traditional forms of social capital, the data, they say, actually reveal considerable political health.

In a review of the book in the *American Prospect*, for example, Garry Wills chalked up Putnam's assessment to "'good old days'-ism," which led Putnam to chase the wrong phenomenon. The real story becomes clear when we focus on new forms of civic participation and engagement and old forms that are actually increasing. We must brace ourselves, Wills contends, "to bear the good news that America has never been more participative, interactive, inclusive, or charitable."

Andrew Sullivan, in the London *Sunday Times*, also sees health where Putnam sees danger. Sullivan's main response is a shrug. "Has it occurred to Putnam," he writes, "that voting rates may be down not because people loathe their government but because they are actually quite happy with it? Has it occurred to him that large numbers of people are no longer involved in political causes such as the civil rights movement because most of their goals have actually been met?"

Margaret Talbot's assessment in the *New York Times Book Review* was more nuanced. While she recognized that the evidence demonstrates a weakening of associational life, that does not justify, she argues, "Putnam's overarching narrative of decline." She points to the different forms of social capital that are emerging nowadays, and she rightly emphasizes (where Putnam had only gestured at) the effects of women's presence in the workplace. In Talbot's view, "with women in the paid labor force, we will never enjoy quite the level of associational life we had in the 1950s. And in the end, that trade-off may be worth it."

Reviewing Putnam's book in the *Washington Post*, Francis Fukuyama expressed a similar ambivalence. Fukuyama is also persuaded that there exist important new sources of social capital (such as those generated by the Internet). The difference, he argues, is both quantitative and qualitative. "The grandchild's more numerous social connections are shallower, more transient, and imbued with less moral content than the grandfather's." But the real question is, So what? As Fukuyama puts it, "it is not clear that democracy is necessarily healthiest when large numbers of citizens are perpetually eager to strike, demonstrate, or pressure Congress via lobbying groups in Washington."

Is the decline (or perhaps the transformation) of social capital a problem for democracy? We don't know yet. We live in a time of peace and prosperity, not a season of national crisis. Emerson wrote that adversity introduces a man to himself. I suspect his insight has a corollary at the national level: Adversity introduces a country to itself. In this light, Putnam's critics may be too hasty in giving American democracy a clean bill of health. We may not know until it is put to the test.

Putnam's argument, of course, focuses on one—and only one—of the many challenges now facing democratic life and practice in America. There are others: the thinning of our public philosophy, the erosion of the normative (not just the social) foundations of civil society, the ideological transformation of political leadership, the fragmentation

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of social groups and political identity, the cynicism and disaffection of the electorate, the debasement of public discourse, and the social restructuring of communities imposed by technological innovation in a globalized economy.

Cumulatively, these factors leave democracy's health very much in doubt, particularly when the time comes again for us to face a national crisis like war or financial collapse.

The suspicion that the problems facing American democracy may be more serious than we hope is only reinforced by Putnam's roseate prescription. Indeed, this is the most conspicuous weakness to *Bowling Alone*. While acknowledging the impossibility of proclaiming any panacea for civic disengagement, Putnam is singularly optimistic that citizens today can be as civically creative as were those who lived in the Progressive era.

The solution lies in an assertion of individual and collective will. All we need to do, he suggests, is to commit ourselves to regenerating civic engagement and with it, high levels of social capital:

> So I set before America's parents, educators, and, above all, America's young adults the following challenge: *Let us find ways to ensure that by 2010 the level of civic engagement among Americans then coming of age in all parts of our society will match that of their grandparents when they were that same age, and that at the same time bridging social capital will be substantially greater than it was in their grandparents' era.*

Putnam doesn't end there. He offers similar challenges to employers, urban developers and regional planners, clergy and laity, media and Internet executives, artists and art benefactors, politicians, government officials, and ordinary citizens. The words are inspiring. Still, where he has earned the right to make strong statements about the decline of social capital, his prescriptions are, so to speak, wholly unearned.

The third part of *Bowling Alone* is given to unpacking the complex reasons for the decline in social capital in America. Putnam cites the pressures of time and money, not least the special pressures faced by the two-career family. He takes up the growth of suburbanization and urban sprawl and the time given to commuting. He examines the effects of electronic communication, especially television's privatizing of leisure time. Most important, he notes the generational change that has come from "the replacement of the long civic generation by their less-involved children and grandchildren."

Even if one wanted to weight these factors differently or to add a few others (the changes that have taken place in moral culture, for example), the list of reasons would still be largely structural and historical in nature. In other words, the reasons Putnam himself gives for the decline in social capital are factors largely independent of choice.

But structural and historical factors almost always play out in ways over which individuals have little influence—which means, if Putnam's analysis of decline is right, that very much less than he hopes can be achieved by the solution he proposes in the assertion of individual and collective will. Alan Ryan, writing in the *New York Review of Books*, is right when he asks, "Why then does [Putnam] expect anyone to listen when he presents them with a task they do not know how to perform?"

Nearly every reader of *Bowling Alone* has noticed this chasm between the dismal analysis of social decline in the book's central chapters and the sunny vision of democratic possibilities in the book's conclusion. Putnam's critics want, for the most part, to argue that all will be well as soon as we adjust to new forms of associational life, and thus they have been entirely consistent in embracing Putnam's optimism and attacking his pessimistic evidence.

The answer, however, may be exactly the opposite: The hard lines of Putnam's analysis may be the truth of things, and the cheery conclusion only wishful thinking. We have nothing but Enlightenment-era institutions to face post-Enlightenment social, economic, and cultural circumstances, and the lessons that Putnam would have us learn from the Gilded Age and his beloved, civically inclined, association-forming Progressive era are far less applicable than he imagines.

Where that leaves us is in a very anxious place, indeed. ♦

Strauss Among the Straussians

Leo Strauss and America. **BY STEVEN LENZNER**

Since he was born and reared in Germany, it is not difficult to understand why Leo Strauss felt affection and gratitude towards the United States, his adopted country. On more than one occasion he expressed an acute appreciation for the decencies liberal democracy managed to preserve amid the savagery of the twentieth century.

Steven Lenzner is completing a dissertation on Leo Strauss at Harvard University.

In the years since his death in 1973, liberal democracy has—in its own peculiar way—returned the appreciation, as Strauss has become the focus of increased scholarly attention, both for his own thought and for his perceived influence on contemporary American politics and political theory.

The latest volume to take up Strauss focuses on his understanding of America. Unlike other recent studies, however, *Leo Strauss, the Straussians, and the American Regime* was written by stu-

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dents and followers of Strauss. And since Strauss has been portrayed as everything from a dogmatic theocrat to a closet Nietzschean, a volume by Straussians should be a welcome corrective.

To some degree, it is. But, unfortunately, *Leo Strauss, the Straussians, and the American Regime* fails to make good on the promise of its comprehensive title. A collection of twenty-nine essays edited by Kenneth L. Deutsch and John A. Murley, the book is misleading about its primary subjects: Its account of the "regime" contradicts Strauss's articulation of the term, and the picture it paints of Strauss and his teaching sometimes seems as distorted as a portrait by Picasso. There is also a surprising neglect of Strauss's genuine impact on American political thought and practice.

The book devotes two sections of its essays to "the American regime," with articles on Strauss's influence on the study of the Congress, the presidency, the Supreme Court, the bureaucracy, and other areas of practical concern. Though these pieces are for the most part well done, they have little to do with the American regime as Strauss understood it.

Strauss defined "regime" as "the way of life of a society," which, he taught, is determined by the manner in which a society answers the question, "Who should rule?" A democracy, for example, asserts "the common man" should rule.

"When the authoritative type is the common man," Strauss wrote in his most famous work, *Natural Right and History*, "everything has to justify itself before the tribunal of the common man; everything which cannot be justified before that tribunal becomes, at best, merely tolerated, if not despised or suspect." Such a democracy produces a way of life that is, above all, determined by its understanding of equality.

Thus, a genuinely "Straussian" account of the American regime would resemble that provided by Tocqueville in *Democracy in America* more than the "institutional" one provided by, say, *The Federalist Papers*. In *Natural Right and History*, Strauss used the term "American Constitution" only once. At the outset of the thematic articulation of "regime" in his chapter on "Classic Natural Right," Strauss cautioned against mistaking our specific legal

Leo Strauss, the Straussians, and the American Regime
edited by Kenneth L. Deutsch
and John A. Murley
Rowman & Littlefield, 451 pp., $29.95

Leo Strauss as a young man and as a professor at the University of Chicago.

arrangements for what we are as a political whole: "The American Constitution is not the same thing as the American way of life." Yet the focus of most of the essays in *Leo Strauss, the Straussians, and the American Regime* is far more on our Constitution than our way of life.

The best two essays in the book are Mark Blitz's "Government Practice and the School of Strauss" and Charles Kesler's "A New Birth of Freedom: Harry V. Jaffa and the Study of America." Blitz's brilliant essay, the last of the book's twenty-nine, is the only one to address thematically the important subject of Strauss and American conservatism. Kesler's account of Jaffa's achievement provides a model of a Straussian analysis of a regime. It focuses almost exclusively on Jaffa's great study of the Lincoln-Douglas debates, *Crisis of the House Divided*, first published in 1959. Expounding that work sympathetically and perceptively, Kesler reproduces in distilled form Jaffa's demonstration of the tremendous extent to which American political life is governed by its self-definition of equality. (Though, by confining himself largely to *Crisis of the House Divided*, Kesler implicitly offers a telling commentary on Jaffa's subsequent work.)

Kesler's essay points to the considerable extent to which Jaffa informs the approach taken by many of this volume's contributors. No doubt Strauss admired Jaffa's achievement—particularly his articulation of Lincoln's greatness. Yet admiration should not be confused with agreement. Kesler brings out two aspects of *Crisis of the House Divided* that are distant from Strauss's own work: the Lincolnian attempt to synthesize liberal democracy and Christianity, and the promotion of equality (albeit an equality incompatible with vulgar egalitarianism). Strauss would have been doubtful about the Lincolnian synthesis, and he would not have endorsed the "categorical imperative" of equality Jaffa discerned in Lincoln's thought and action. As Kesler notes, it is "impossible to do justice to human equality and human inequality at the same time in politics." Strauss's "classic natural right" teaching leaves no doubt where he stood: "Since the classics viewed moral and political matters in the light of man's perfection, they were not egalitarians."

In *Crisis of the House Divided*, Jaffa established and endorsed the para-

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mount moral purpose of Lincoln's career. Jaffa claims (as do a number of contributors to this volume, George Anastaplo and Hadley Arkes, in particular) there was an analogous intention in Strauss's own work. Strauss was not indifferent to the claims of moral virtue, but such claims did not fundamentally animate and inform his writing.

Jaffa's own self-consciously authoritative contribution to *Leo Strauss, the Straussians, and the American Regime* is called "Strauss at One Hundred," and it demonstrates a marked indifference to what Strauss promoted as the primary responsibility of an interpreter: textual fidelity. Only by failing to engage Strauss's texts is Jaffa able to conclude that "to secure recognition . . . of the moral authority based upon the dignity of man, supported by both reason and revelation" was "the essential purpose of Leo Strauss's life and work." Jaffa quotes only three passages, two of which are opening lines from Strauss's writings. Strauss's beginnings are, as a rule, ironic—a fact Jaffa ignores, thereby falling into the trap that Strauss identified as the chief failing of contemporary interpreters of Socrates: He mistakes the "ambiguous starting point or the ambiguous results of his inquiries for the substance of his thought," to quote *Natural Right and History*. As a philosopher—a man passionately devoted above all to understanding the truth about all things—Strauss's chief intention could not have been the establishment of any sort of "authority." Political philosophy, though respectful of political life's need for authoritative opinion, cannot recognize authority as binding upon thought: "By uprooting authority, philosophy recognizes nature as the standard."

It would be unjust, however, to lay all the blame at Jaffa's feet. Among the essays devoted to articulating Strauss's thought, only Eugene Miller's thoughtful contribution shows any awareness of the need to interpret Strauss in the manner in which Strauss interpreted the work of others.

In *Persecution and the Art of Writing*, Strauss stated that "one writes as one reads." Since Strauss must be considered a leading contender for the greatest reader of all-time, any interpreter who wishes to be taken seriously must show that he recognizes the need to give Strauss's texts the most exacting and detailed attention possible. Instead, the contributors to this volume tend not to engage his writings in the manner those texts demand.

Strauss's enemies show no reluctance to distort his teaching. This is regrettable, but not surprising. Yet as long as this is the case, his friends have a special responsibility to do justice to his thought. ♦

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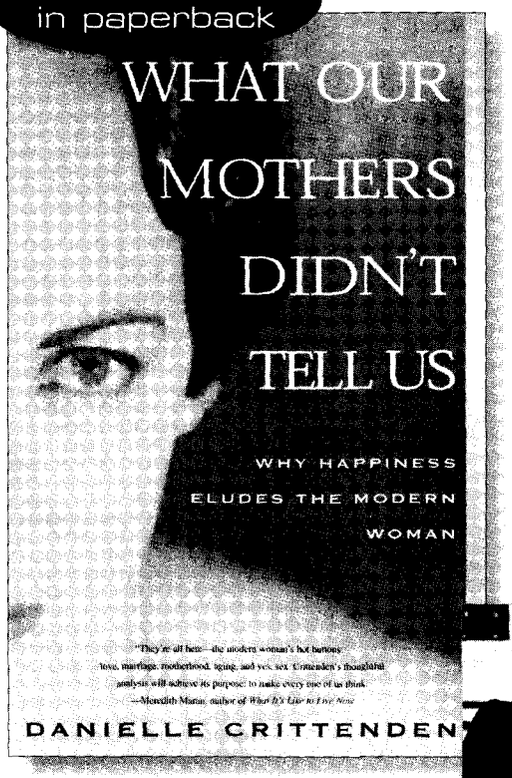

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What Winning Means

In Kosovo to stay?

BY TOM DONNELLY AND GARY SCHMITT

It's called Camp Bondsteel. The home of the U.S. Army in Kosovo, Bondsteel suddenly appears on the horizon as one drives south from Pristina, hovering enormous and alien over the raw countryside, bristling with antennae and satellite dishes and buzzing with bug-eyed Apache attack helicopters. The Army has been building Bondsteel for fourteen months, and construction will continue for years. America has come to Kosovo to stay.

To be sure, commanders at Bondsteel insist that they could pack up and be gone tomorrow, but the ten-foot earthen berm and fence ringing the eight-hundred-acre camp belies the briefings: There is no real "exit strategy." This is what victory in a Balkans war looks like. Camp Bondsteel and the dozens of other American, British, German, Italian, and NATO encampments in Kosovo were the prizes won in Operation Allied Force, that very peculiar war fought in the spring of 1999. In seventy-eight days of bombing, the United States and its principal European allies won the responsibility of running part of "the former Yugoslavia." These seventy-eight days mean years of constabulary deployment, involving tens of thousands of soldiers.

This is winning? Yes, it is, as Ivo Daalder and Michael O'Hanlon take pains to remind us in their new book, *Winning Ugly: NATO's War to Save Kosovo*. Daalder and O'Hanlon make a strong case that Allied Force ended in a victory for NATO: The Serbian president Slobodan Milosevic "unquestionably lost the war, and his defeat was overwhelming." He had to relinquish control over Kosovo and withdraw Serb forces. He failed in his efforts at ethnic cleansing, and the future political status of the province is no longer a matter in which Belgrade has much say. Indeed, Kosovo is in effect an international protectorate, under the formal administration of the U.N. and with an occupation force of more than forty thousand NATO troops.

Winning Ugly
NATO's War to Save Kosovo
by Ivo Daalder
and Michael O'Hanlon
Brookings, 360 pp., $26.95

Yet NATO's war to save Kosovo was waged so fecklessly, and victory was won so narrowly, that politicians have been in a rush to forget Allied Force. Despite victory, the war underlined the Clinton administration's inattention to foreign policy and lack of credibility. (Al Gore makes more of his vote in favor of the Persian Gulf War a decade ago than any role he may have had in Kosovo.) And, despite his initial commitment to fighting the war, George W. Bush continues to echo the complaints of congressional Republicans that the Balkans are a sinkhole for American military power. His likely national security adviser, Condoleezza Rice, drew her most enthusiastic response from delegates at the Philadelphia convention when she asserted that "the U.S. military cannot be a global police force" or "the world's 9-1-1."

These complaints are especially ironic, for, as Daalder and O'Hanlon recall, it was President George Bush who, late in 1992, warned Milosevic in a letter that "in the event of conflict in Kosovo caused by Serbian action, the United States will be prepared to employ military force against the Serbs in Kosovo and in Serbia proper." Indeed, perhaps the most helpful aspect of *Winning Ugly* is its scholarly memory and clarity. As befits two Brookings Institution members (Daalder also did a turn on Clinton's National Security Council as director of European affairs during the height of the Bosnia crisis), the authors are adept at pointing out the contradictions between military realities and politicians' rationalizations. They are also reasonably impartial in their judgments, subjecting the postwar rationales of the likes of national security adviser Sandy Berger and defense secretary William Cohen to penetrating analyses.

Daalder and O'Hanlon are at their best when they remind us how close we came to losing the Kosovo war. In March and April of last year, it appeared that Milosevic might prevail. As the book makes clear, there were in fact two wars for Kosovo: Milosevic's war and NATO's war. "NATO was clearly losing the first; in fact it was barely a participant in the struggle between Serb forces and the Kosovar Albanian people. It was doing better in the second, in the sense of turning up the pain and pressure on Slobodan Milosevic, but it was hardly winning that conflict either."

Ultimately, Milosevic was stopped. As *Winning Ugly* makes clear, the Serb strongman failed in his attempts to make the conflict a dispute among the great powers when the Russians abandoned him (though weakness in the West allowed Russia to posture in ways that prolonged the war, frustrated NATO's actions, and gave Milosevic reason to believe he could win). Even the mistaken bombing of the Chinese embassy in Belgrade has proved little more than a hiccup in relations between China and the United States.

But even more decisive in Milosevic's defeat was the increasing prospect of a NATO ground invasion. In the period following NATO's fiftieth anniversary meeting in Washington in April 1999, the alliance began making serious plans to commit ground troops. The Clinton administration finally realized that it might lose the war, which, if nothing else, would have had disastrous political consequences. It might also have spelled the death of NATO.

Tom Donnelly is deputy executive director, and Gary Schmitt executive director, of the Project for the New American Century.

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Winning Ugly rightly underscores a lesson about modern warfare: Punitive airstrikes remain insufficient to compel a determined enemy to admit defeat. To achieve important political ends—and for Milosevic, the loss of Kosovo was a serious political matter—ground forces are needed to pose a threat to a rogue regime's hold on power.

Yet, for all its strengths, Daalder and O'Hanlon's book is not the final word. The full story of the war remains to be told—and, as a tantalizing series of articles on NATO by Dana Priest in the *Washington Post* last fall suggested, it will be a complex and fascinating tale. The war for Kosovo was led by largely liberal governments that came to office promising to transcend politics by forging a new, post-Cold War peace and establishing the rule of international law. For months, the alliance could not bring itself to consider Allied Force other than an exercise in coercive diplomacy. At the center of the story stands President Clinton, embroiled in a sex scandal and impeachment, indifferent to international affairs and lacking credibility in employing military force.

Moreover, *Winning Ugly* is largely silent about the region's future. As the growth of Camp Bondsteel demonstrates, Operation Allied Force didn't really win the war; it was the opening battle in a long campaign for the Balkans and all of southeastern Europe. Daalder and O'Hanlon do not connect their analysis to the larger pattern of European security or to any enduring American security interests; they are sympathetic to the Clinton administration's view that the war for Kosovo was fought largely for humanitarian purposes. In wars like Allied Force, "the immediate objective must be to create and then maintain a secure environment so that the killing will not resume. In many cases, that will be accomplishment enough." But merely stopping the killing in the Balkans has not proved enough—and as long as those who viciously exploit Serb nationalism remain in power, it will not be enough. Nor will the killing stop for long.

Moral factors and the suffering of Bosnians and Kosovar Albanians did have much to do with motivating political leaders. But the Balkans are not Somalia. America and its allies cannot afford to walk away from the region without suffering a serious geopolitical defeat. The threat from Serbia pales in comparison to the Soviet threat, but, with Western Europe secure and much of Central Europe now in NATO, it is the sole immediate challenge to the creation of a "Europe whole and free."

This is a challenge that will not go away. In Montenegro, Milosevic continues to provoke a confrontation by offering the Montenegrins a suicidal choice between accepting changes to the Yugoslav constitution (which will lose the Montenegrins any voice in the Yugoslav federation and risk the kind of repression that the Kosovars, Bosnians, Croats, and Slovenians have suffered) and rejecting those changes (which will give Milosevic an excuse for military action against the struggling democracy). Faced with this challenge, NATO is repeating the mistakes made in Kosovo and Bosnia. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright has urged Montenegrin president Milo Djukanovic to "hold his nose and agree to take part" in the federation. NATO is advertising its weakness at every opportunity: Alliance leaders admit that they have made no contingency plans to defend Montenegro, while NATO Secretary General George Robertson has been forced to beg Russian President Vladimir Putin to restrain Milosevic. The American administration's concern appears to be keeping Montenegro out of the headlines until after the November election.

America and its allies have yet to face up to the commitments they have undertaken in the Balkans. Though the burdens are relatively light (the U.S. force in the Balkans is just 5 percent of the force stationed in Europe to defend against a Soviet invasion), the failure to tie them to a serious security interest means that the American mission in the Balkans will remain tenuous and contingent, forever in search of an elusive "exit strategy." The truth is that an American exit from the Balkans would likely lead to an American exit from a position of leadership in Europe, and that would be a truly ugly defeat. ♦

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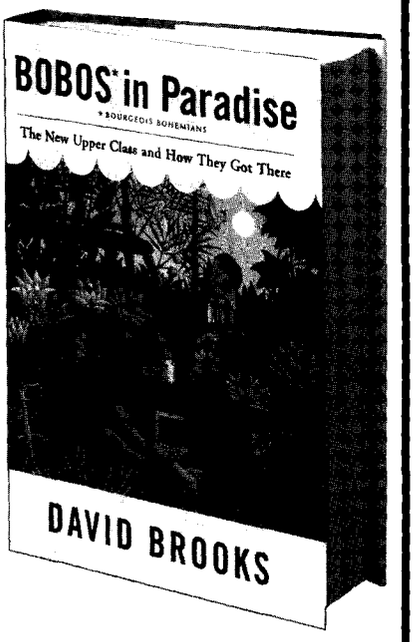

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Socialists of America, Disunited

Why the Revolution never happened here.

BY JOSHUA MURAVCHIK

During both political conventions this summer, local police arrested scores of demonstrators demanding . . . well, they couldn't say exactly what it was they were demanding, much like the protesters who gathered during the meeting of the IMF this spring in Washington to let the world know that they were fed up—not with anything in particular; just fed up.

It was as though these costumed, painted marchers were reenacting a drama for which they had the stage directions but not the lines—despite the fact that the story they were reprising was only a generation or two old. As one of the IMF protesters told the *Washington Post*, he was carrying on in the footsteps of "his ex-hippie mother and his anti-fascist grandfather."

It Didn't Happen Here
Why Socialism Failed in the United States
by Seymour Martin Lipset and Gary Marks
W.W. Norton, 384 pp., $26.95

The Other American
The Life of Michael Harrington
by Maurice Isserman
PublicAffairs, 449 pp., $28.50

As a 1960s radical, I knew that despite all the talk of "youth rebellion" and the "generation gap," the revolutionaries of the 1960s were doing exactly what their parents most approved, since many of the parents themselves had been revolutionaries (or "anti-fascists") in the 1930s. It was, therefore, inevitable that the next generation of children—reared on wistful retellings of the sit-ins, teach-ins, be-ins, and love-ins of the Age of Aquarius—would want their turn when they reached protesting age.

The reason their efforts have been so feeble is that they lack a czar, or Great Depression, or Jim Crow, or Vietnam War to provide a compelling target. Then, too, they lack a vision of the happy future that will unfold after their chosen dragon is slain. For their parents and grandparents, the name of that vision was "socialism," an ideal that lay at the center of much of the turmoil of the twentieth century.

All over the world, socialism was the banner of rebellion, and for the most part it triumphed. By the end of the 1970s, advocates of socialism of one kind or another—communism, African socialism, Arab socialism, social democracy—held sway over most of mankind. America, however, caught only a glancing blow from this movement. For all their passionate intensity, the American radicals, whether of the 1930s or the 1960s, never amounted to more than a small minority, and neither the Socialist nor Communist parties ever gained a foothold in U.S. electoral politics.

In their valuable new book, *It Didn't Happen Here*, Seymour Martin Lipset, the doyen of political sociology, and Gary Marks attempt to explain this "American exceptionalism." They are scarcely the first. As they note in their preface, "the academic literature on this topic numbers in the hundreds of books and thousands of articles." But theirs is likely to remain the authoritative text.

The problem, they say, is "not that there are too few plausible explanations, but that there are too many." Lipset and Marks sort them into comprehensible categories and then assess each, mostly by means of comparisons with other countries or parties. For example, many writers have pointed to the obstacles that the U.S. electoral system places in the paths of third parties, but Lipset and Marks remind us that numerous third party candidates—Ross Perot, John Anderson, George Wallace, Robert LaFollette—were able to draw many more votes than the socialists.

Broadly speaking, the explanations are of two kinds: those that point to objective aspects of America's constitution, history, or sociology, and those that point to self-defeating actions by the socialists. Lipset and Marks believe both factors contributed. For example, the outbreak of World War I taught the international socialist movement the falsity of Marx and Engels's dictum that "the working man has no country." After learning to pay deference to nationalist sentiment, most socialist parties in Europe recovered their strength—but in America, the unique demographics of the working class (composed of waves of diverse immigrants) discouraged class solidarity. Among America's polyglot proletariat, the tug of ethnicity was harder to overcome because it pulled in multiple directions.

The American socialists compounded such problems by their own dogmatism. The Socialist party in America, Lipset and Marks point out, "was one of the most orthodox Marxist parties in the democratic world." Fatally, it allowed itself to be divided from the labor movement. But it can be difficult to distinguish cause and effect in such matters. Few things contributed more to the socialists' isolation from labor than the party's opposition to World War I after America entered the conflict. But the lack of workers in their ranks was, as Lipset and Marks acknowledge, one reason the socialists persisted in their antiwar stance: Pacifism ran stronger among middle-class socialists than among their proletarian comrades.

Joshua Muravchik, a resident scholar at the American Enterprise Institute, is writing a book on the rise and fall of socialism, which will be published next year by Encounter Books.

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The marginality of the Left may explain why the Communist party grew stronger than the Socialist party. In other democratic countries, with the exceptions of France and Italy after World War II, socialists dominated the Left. In America, too, the socialists did better in appealing to the general public, winning many more municipal and legislative elections and garnering more votes for their presidential tickets. The Communists, however, built a far stronger organization. Their party had a hundred thousand members at its peak, many times more than the Socialist party. It had more money (thanks to regular contributions from Moscow), more cadres working within labor, liberal, civil rights, and ethnic organizations, and a greater presence in the worlds of arts, letters, and mass entertainment.

The Communist party finally collapsed in 1956 less from the pounding it took at the hands of McCarthyism than from Khrushchev's speech to the twentieth congress of the Soviet Communist party revealing Stalin's crimes. At last, communism's barbarity was confirmed by the only witness the American Communists regarded as authoritative: the dictator of the Soviet Union.

Still, the shattered party left a lingering shadow. Even as the Communists came to admit what other Americans had long known about the USSR, many somehow clung to the conceit that they were wiser and nobler. They constituted an enduring milieu or culture, defined by an eagerness to see the worst in America and the best in its enemies.

Traces of this attitude remained visible where the party had once made itself felt: cause groups, academe, Hollywood, intellectual magazines. And it was perpetuated through the "red-diaper babies" who made up a large part of the 1960s New Left. This generation eschewed pro-Sovietism, but it romantically embraced the "revolutionary" movements of China, Cuba, Vietnam, and other non-western countries. It anathematized anti-communism, and eventually it produced a new historiography of American communism that consisted of apologias and celebrations.

In recent years, as damning revelations about Rosenberg, Hiss, and other Soviet spies have poured forth from Russian and American archives, historians have yielded ground while formulating new defenses. Two prominent ones, Ellen Schrecker of Yeshiva University and Maurice Isserman of Hamilton College, recently took to the pages of the *Nation* to explain that even though it had now been proven that hundreds of American Communists spied for Moscow, "espionage is . . . something that ordinary people, not moral monsters, do." True, it might be necessary to concede in the face of overwhelming evidence that the party was "a rigid, secretive, and undemocratic sect whose leaders followed the Soviet line and recruited for the KGB," but such defects must be weighed against the fact that it was also "the most dynamic organization on the American left, . . . the vehicle through which hundreds of thousands

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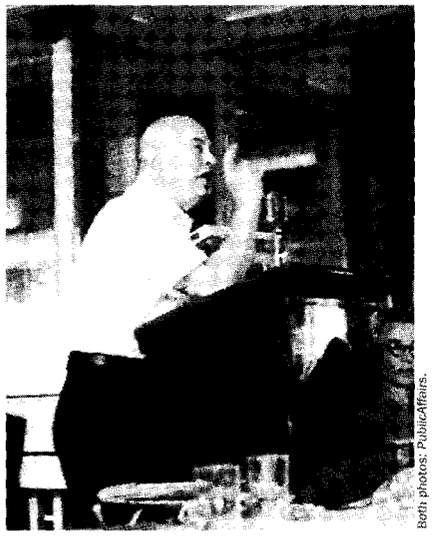
of Americans sought to create a more democratic and egalitarian society."

Isserman has also now given us a highly readable biography of Michael Harrington, former leader of the Socialist party and author of the 1962 *The Other America*, which is credited with inspiring the "war on poverty." The interesting parts of Maurice Isserman's biography, *The Other American*, trace the religious roots of Harrington's politics, showing how socialism was a substitute for the Catholicism in which his affluent parents had reared him. To the end of his life his commitment to socialism —putatively rational, agnostic, empirical—retained the resonance of religious conviction. As he put it a few months before his death, socialism "is not simply an economic transition, or a political transition [but] the emergence of a new civilization, . . . new ways of life for all the people of the Earth." One could devote a life to it knowing one would never see its attainment, but nonetheless the faith in an ultimate triumph made socialism "a movement of joy."

Although Isserman offers glimpses into Harrington's personal life, *The Other American* is mostly a political biography, and it reveals as much about the author as about the subject. When he left the Catholic Church, Harrington joined up with a socialist group known as the Shachtmanites. Max Shachtman had been a principal protégé of Trotsky's, but had broken with him over the question of how to define the Soviet Union. To Trotsky it was a "degenerated workers' state," meaning that whatever its faults, the USSR was still somehow preferable to the capitalist states. Shachtman, on the other hand, concluded that the USSR was neither capitalist nor socialist but had hatched a new social system, unforeseen by Marx, "bureaucratic collectivism."

Although the argument was scholastic, it enabled the Shachtmanites to appreciate that communism, or "Stalinism," as they preferred to call it, was worse—by any measure of humane values—than capitalism. Shachtman was a spellbinding lecturer, and his periodic lectures (like Castro's, of enormous length) brought home to his radical



Both photos: PublicAffairs.

Harrington and Shachtman, both in 1962.

audiences the evils of the Soviet system. Stalin had murdered not only more people but more *Communists* than Hitler, Shachtman would explain, rattling off numbers to prove it. He held a famous 1951 debate with Earl Browder, who had been expelled from the Communist party but whose loyal following believed that he would be back at the helm of American communism as soon as the misunderstanding was cleared up in Moscow. Shachtman listed the fates of leaders of various Communist parties behind the Iron Curtain who had been purged in the same twist of party line that had brought down Browder. Then he pointed to Browder and intoned: "There, but for an accident of geography, sits a ghost." Browder, so the story is told, turned ashen and failed to rise from his chair. There was also mirth in Shachtman's polemics: After Khrushchev's speech, Shachtman observed that Stalin "has been officially demoted from the office of greatest, wisest, and most adored leader in recorded history to the lesser office of maniacal mass-murderer, and some of his other improprieties and errors have also been registered."

Under such tutoring, the Shachtmanites became fierce anti-Communists, as did other veterans of the Left: the followers of Norman Thomas and Jay Lovestone, and such individual writers as Whittaker Chambers, Sidney Hook, George Orwell, and Arthur Koestler. Some had started out as Communists, others as Trotskyists or socialists. Some became conservatives, others remained on the non-Communist left. Because they had known the Communists from the inside or as competitors for influence, they more easily saw through the Communists' deceptions. And because they were radicals or former radicals themselves, they fought them with a zealotry that ordinary liberals or conservatives could not match.

Harrington's involvement with the Shachtmanites provides the main theme for Isserman. In his treatment, the tragedy of Harrington's career was that he allowed himself to be influenced by anti-Communists. When the New Left arose in the 1960s, the socialists, Harrington included, found themselves at odds with these younger radicals, who opposed anti-communism. A decade later, however, Harrington formed his own group, apologized abjectly for having criticized the New Left, effected a merger with one of the remaining New Left groups (the New American Movement), and ended up an advocate for Tanzania's socialist dictator Julius Nyerere and Nicaragua's Sandinistas. If only he had done all this earlier, laments Isserman, Harrington might have helped to build a more vibrant Left.

For the most part Isserman is coy about what underlies his criticisms of the Shachtmanites. Rather than lambaste them explicitly for being anti-Communist, he taxes them with being "sectarian." It was "sectarian" to criticize pro-communism in the New Left. Likewise when Harrington was a member of the Shachtmanites or the Socialist party, he was "sectarian," according to Isserman, but when he split to found his own little group, then he was no longer sectarian but the victim of sectarianism.

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What makes Isserman's gambit transparent is that the very term "Shachtmanite" is Isserman's epithet for anti-Communist. The Shachtmanites finally disbanded in 1958 to join the Socialist party, abandoning the last vestiges of their distinct ideological line.

Most of what Isserman writes about occured after this. Any number of those singled out in Isserman's book as "Shachtmanites" had never been among them—including Penn Kemble, Bayard Rustin, and me. (I was ten when Shachtmanism folded.) To be sure, when in the mid-1960s I joined the Socialist party, I loved Shachtman's lectures, but what I learned from them had nothing to do with the Trotskyite arcana that had once been the substance of Shachtmanism. It had everything to do with the evil nature of communism.

It is for this that he is hated, and not only by Isserman. In a lengthy review of Isserman's book in the *New Republic*, sociologist Alan Wolfe wrote that in joining the Shachtmanites, Harrington had stooped "to the lowest and the most counterproductive form . . . of sectarian politics of which the left is capable." And Wolfe echoed with embellishment Isserman's canard that the late Tom Kahn, a one-time Shachtmanite, had written a speech for AFL-CIO President George Meany that crudely mocked homosexuals. Since Kahn was a homosexual himself, Wolfe and Isserman portray him as pathetic and opportunistic. But there is no reason to believe that Kahn wrote those lines, and Isserman presents none. What Kahn did do was serve as wordsmith and point man in the AFL-CIO's legendary crusade against communism, and this apparently makes him fair game for such an underhanded attack.

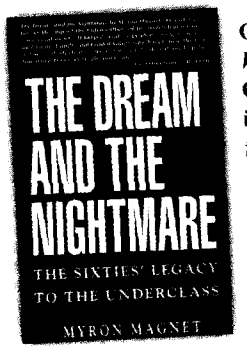
Wolfe, who has since moved rightward, wrote as recently as the early 1980s:

> In the Soviet Union the means of production are not in private hands, planning is the most prominent feature of economic life, there has been a marked tendency toward greater equality, and from time to time the Soviets act in support of socialist revolutions around the world. . . . None of these advances, and advances they are, would have been possible without the consolidation of political power to expand economically and the consolidation of military power to ward off a threat to those gains.

Both Wolfe and Isserman were New Leftists, and, like other New Leftists, they were often sympathetic toward Communist regimes when these were stacked up against America. In this, they were guilty of moral blindness. These days, with the Berlin Wall a memory, everyone is anti-Communist, and those who muffed this fundamental issue have rarely been called to account. But apparently they cannot leave it there.

American Communists liked to call themselves "premature anti-fascists." It was characteristic of their self-admiration and their mendacity, since for the nearly two years of the Stalin-Hitler pact they were practically the only people in America who were not anti-fascist. Perhaps it is time to coin the term "premature anti-Communist," to describe all of those—"Shachtmanites" and others—who fought tooth-and-nail to defeat the Evil Empire when it was riding high. That seems to be a sin that the likes of Isserman cannot forgive. ♦

Understanding BUSH



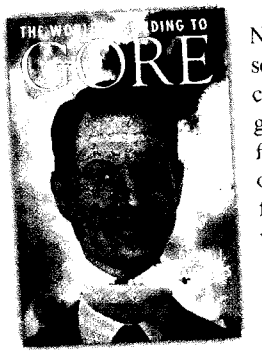
On January 5, 2000, the editors of the *Wall Street Journal* asked Governor George Bush what was the most important book he'd ever read, aside from the Bible.

Here's what Bush said:
"***The Dream and the Nightmare*** by Myron Magnet crystallized for me the impact the failed culture of the Sixties had on our values and society. It helped create dependency on government, undermined family, and eroded values which had stood the test of time and which are critical if we want a decent and hopeful tomorrow for every single American."

In a front page article on June 12, 2000, the New York Times referred to ***The Dream and the Nightmare*** book as one of the, "first building blocks of the 'compassionate conservative' platform."

239 pages, paper, $15.95

Understanding GORE



No writer takes Al Gore more seriously than nationally syndicated columnist Debra J. Saunders. In a guided tour of Goredom, Saunders follows the curves and switch-backs of Gore's intellectual journey—from Global Warming foe to wheeler-dealer at global environmental conferences; from pro-life to pro-choice; from someone who chopped and hoed it to the scourge of tobacco; from pro-NRA to anti-gun; from Mr. Clean to No Controlling Legal Authority; from theology school to the Buddhist Temple.

In ***The World According to Gore***, Saunders has taken Gore apart, put him back together again, and provided the reader with an insight into the politician he is and the president he would be.

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—*from Al Gore's August 17, 2000, acceptance speech*

Al Quixote: The Man from La Mancha • *by Cervantes / 3*

Chapter 1

One morning Al Quixote rose in his chamber in the Fortress of Right, which in earlier days had been known as the White House.

"Sancho! Sancho Lieberman!" he called out to his trusty squire, "Bring me my armor, for today we go out and battle with the forces of wealth and privilege!"

His squire brought in Prince Al Quixote's steel-lined blue suit and his titanium tie, which Al liked to wear during what he imagined were battle days.

"I do not need a helmet today, since I had my hair reinforced with graphite," Al said, "But I am glad to see you are wearing yours."

"Actually, Mr. President, we call this a kipa, or yarmulke. It's not really a warrior helmet, Sir, since today we only have meetings with the Lithuanian prime minister . . ."

"Nonsense!" Al Quixote thundered. "Today we fight the lords of privilege who oppress our people! Today we go to battle against the Republicans and the lackeys of the bosses! As my father, King Al the Indomitable, fought the predators of profit on behalf of the little people of America, so I, too, Al Quixote, must stand on the battlements and protect the weak, the small, and the feeble minded! So I say to you, Sancho, it is off to war!"

Al Quixote stood up to his full height, looking out the window across Pennsylvania Avenue. "There! There is our enemy. We must storm their defenses before they exploit one more American!"

"Sir," Sancho Lieberman said calmly. "That's the Riggs Bank ATM. Those people aren't being exploited. They are lining up to make cash withdrawals."

"The oppression of working families is truly a horrible thing. Bring me my solar powered tank! I must go and tilt at the Big Money interests. Do not crucify me on a cross of gold!"

"Actually, the country has been off the gold standard for some time, Mr. President," Sancho muttered as he went to get Al Quixote's mount.

Soon they were emerging from the walls of the Fortress of Right onto Pennsylvania Avenue, Al Quixote in his tank, which had a top speed of 1.75 mph, and Sancho Lieberman on foot, since it was the Sabbath.

"Good Morning, my poor subjects," Al declared, greeting the people in the ATM line. "I have come to liberate you from the chains that bind you, from the tyranny of the financial interests!"

"Excuse me, Mr. President," one of the citizens responded politely. "You just knocked over my briefcase, and now you're standing on my *Wall Street Journal*."

"Do not fear, good people! I strike a blow for equality!" And with that, Al Quixote took out his trusty umbrella, which he always carried on cloudy days, and began whacking the ATM machine. "Take that, agent of greed!" he bellowed.

"Oh God," one of the good citizens muttered, "I don't have time for this. I've got to get to work. There must be some other ATM around here." And the crowd scurried off, leaving Al Quixote to fight his battle alone, save for the aid of his trusty sidekick, Sancho Lieberman, who was seen on the phone, desperately trying to make amends to Al From, the president of the Democratic Leadership Council.

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From "Rogues" to Rivals

Charles Hill is a research fellow at the Hoover Institution.

The State Department's announcement about no more "rogue states" is a policy shift worth pondering. Recently the United States has given dictatorships one break after another: paying one not to export missile technology; dropping our leverage over another's human rights abuses; providing permanent normal trade relations; easing sanctions; pulling back from inspections; providing "respect" for those once reviled; even apologizing for America's past mistakes.

The cold war's central concept was containment, contested dramatically by the division of four countries: Germany, China, Korea, and Vietnam (along with Cuba, and the Florida Strait between the Cuban capitals of Havana and Miami). The collapse of communism knocked out only one: East Germany. The others survived—as did communism's clients Iraq, Syria, and Libya—and continue to inflict misery on masses of people. With Iran's theocracy they are forming an international proliferation league for weapons of mass destruction.

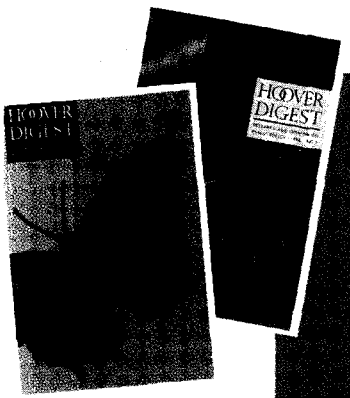
There are reasons to go easy on these regimes. There is little domestic support for a hard-line stance and lots of international displeasure with sanctions. **There is a sense that ex-rogues pose no threat, harming their own people more than others.** There is fear that unless we prop them up they might lash out or just disintegrate, burdening South Korea, for example, as West Germany was burdened ten years ago; better to help them make a "soft landing." Above all is the belief that globalization will make them prosperous, which in turn will make them democratic. So we needn't worry; history will do our work for us.

These regimes are aware of this "American theory" and determined to prove it false by acquiring economic strength while staying politically closed. With China as exemplar they can envision an alternative to America's model in the form of national socialism, that is, fascism. Highly nationalistic, glorifying the state and "the people," political power is concentrated in an elite always ready to use the army and police. Vast social programs enclose every aspect of life. The economy is designed to take full advantage of the global market to strengthen the state, and private economic activity is encouraged this far and no farther. "Market socialism" rules, and democracy is regarded as a menace to the strength of the nation. Russia shows signs of leaning this way.

American trade and investment, pressures to build structures of law, civil society, and free expression, can have an effect. Most of all **the United States needs to see these regimes and their evolving coalition for what they are and to hold them to account.** Dinosaurs they may be, but they have fended off extinction and may have perceived a new way to thrive.

— Charles Hill

Paid for by the Hoover Institution, Stanford University.



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KIDS & TOBACCO

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